



The Black Sands

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From the President



LtGen Norman H. Smith, USMC (Ret)

The Association (IJAA) has taken steps in recent months to upgrade our communication process by adding staff professionals dedicated to fulfilling the mission of IJAA. We have added Mark Stevens, Director of Communications and LtCol Raul "Art" Sifuentes, USMC (Ret) as Director, Business Development. (Read about them in this Newsletter). Additionally we owe a vote of thanks to our energetic staff, especially Shayne Jarosz and Anne Swenson, for planning and executing the banner 70th Anniversary of the Iwo Jima Campaign with the reunions and seminars in Alexandria, VA and on Guam during this past February and March.

The Reunion of Honor (RoH) on Iwo Jima brought together some 40 battle survivors, from all services, as well as family members, military educators, historians and students. The Young Marines and

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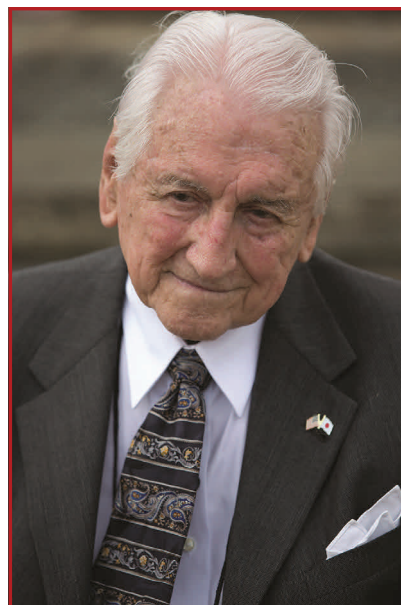
active duty men and women totaled over 450. These were joined on on The Black Sands by approximately 150 Japanese bereaved family members as well as notable American and Japanese government officials. Sharing in this vital and meaningful honor ceremony was the US Secretary of the US Navy, Ray Mabus, The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Joseph Dunford, Jr., USMC and our own revered Lieutenant General Larry Snowden, USMC, (Ret). the senior surviving veteran of the Iwo Jima battle.

Positive steps are being taken to make this emotional ceremony part of an on-going bridge between our two nations. The relationship forged after World War II and now framed in peace, security and sincere friendship, is extremely vital to American and Japanese interests, not only on the Pacific Rim but for our globe at large. And it will continue to be.

I want to mention the unforgettable treat our reunion and seminar participants had on Guam. Adding to the perspectives on Iwo Jima presented by military historians and our own veterans, we reveled in the perspectives presented by a Japanese survivor of Iwo, who journeyed to Guam, told his story and answered questions enabled by our own translator/author Mr. Dan King. He also flew to Iwo Jima with us to attend the Reunion of Honor. This was an extraordinary opportunity to learn history from the Japanese side. Read more about him in this newsletter. Memorable!

The Association continues to march forward fulfilling it's charter toward the advancement of the history of Iwo to the American public. In that regard, I am pleased that IJAA was able to combine it's resources and gratuitously donate assistance to some touring American veterans stranded on Guam in their quest to visit Iwo. I thank the tireless effort of the staff of Military Historical Tours (MHT) for making our program a success. I also thank the veterans and members of IJAA, who through their willing and generous financial support, is allowing your Association to carry out our mission.

General Snowden Inducted into the



Florida Veterans Hall of Fame

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Lawrence F. Snowden will be inducted into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame during ceremonies at the Capitol July 6.

General Snowden is a retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General and senior ranking survivor of the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. A civic leader and past chairman of The Economic Club of Florida, he was instrumental in establishing the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. In 2015, he was recognized during a joint session of Congress by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for his efforts to strengthen the friendship between Japan and the United States.

Published July 2, 2015 by the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

Iwo Jima 70th Anniversary Reunion of Honor

By Matthew M. Burke — Stars and Stripes



IWO TO, Japan — One by one, they descended the steep incline, past the beach grass and lush vegetation that whispered in a melancholy wind. Past the destroyed pill box and rusted machine gun that still peered toward the black sand beach as it did when it fired on their fellow Marines 70 years earlier.

As they hit the volcanic powder below, they sunk up to their ankles, surrounded by rusty shrapnel from devastating Japanese mortar fire. Some faltered, their bodies stiff with age, but they were immediately propped up by the latest generation of Marines.

Nothing was going to keep them from once again hitting the beach. Nothing would keep them from honoring their fallen comrades, perhaps for the last time.



Carl DeHaven being
assisted off of the beach
(Cindy Good Photo)

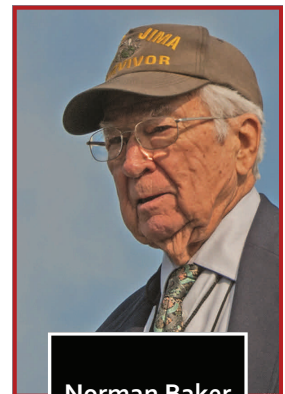
Though it seemed as if eons had passed, the battle for Iwo Jima came alive in their minds.

On Saturday, a couple dozen survivors of the fight returned to battlefield for a ceremony marking its 70th anniversary. Many of the attendees, now in their late 80s and early 90s, said it would be their last journey back to the “sulfur island,” now referred to as Iwo To by the Japanese, who maintain the small scrap of land between the Mariana Islands and the Japanese mainland as a military base.

“When I saw ... the carnage on that beach, and everything just torn to hell all over the place, this is when I went from boyhood to manhood,” said Norman Baker, who was 18 when he hit Red Beach 2 with the 4th Marine Division on Feb. 19, 1945.

“I’m happy to be here with the guys and what have you, but I can contemplate the horror of what we went through in the war and everything, and that will never leave guys like me.”

Baker recounted the pain of losing his best friend, Lincoln Clement Jr., to an exploding shell as they



Norman Baker

(70th Anniversary Continued from page 3)

moved inland during the invasion. He held vigil and ate his rations next to Clement's body until he was evacuated. His friend's death contributed to lifelong nightmares.

"[Lincoln] was like a brother, a dedicated brother," Baker said. "We did everything together. We got so close it was more than family. I was never that close with my brothers or sisters than I was with Linc. And that's why I have never forgotten him, never will. I have his pictures hanging in my library."

Baker also recalled witnessing the artillery barrage that led to the death of Lt. Col. Chandler Johnson, who ordered the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi that was captured in an iconic photo by The Associated Press' Joe Rosenthal.

This week's trip was equally hard on Hershel "Woody" Williams, the last living Medal of Honor recipient from the battle.

"My emotions are like a tornado,"

Williams said — his medal around his neck and great-grandson Benjamin

Casey in his arms — as he surveyed the landscape he attacked with the 3rd Marine Division. "They go up, and then something happens, and they go down. So they've been roller-coastering all day."

Williams was honored for clearing a series of Japanese pill boxes with a flamethrower under heavy fire, then refusing evacuation despite shrapnel wounds.



"I never planned to come back," he said. "I never would have if it hadn't been for grandsons and great-grandsons that talked me into it. But now I'm glad I did, certainly for my sake. It has maybe helped a little in closure."

Williams said it was also important to impart the knowledge and experience to the next generation, so the sacrifices of more than 6,800 U.S. service members killed and 19,000 wounded will not be forgotten. On the Japanese side, approximately 18,000 were killed.

After months of aerial and naval bombardment, the battle for Iwo Jima began Feb. 19, 1945, with the Marines launching an amphibious assault and the Japanese waiting in bunkers dug deep into the volcanic rock.

Seventy-thousand Marines took part in the 36-day battle. Only 216 Japanese soldiers were captured. The rest were killed. The island was declared secure on March 16.

The anniversary commemoration started under an intense sun as several hundred American and Japanese civilians, veterans and government officials arrived on military and commercial flights. They were bused out to the "Reunion of Honor," a solitary obelisk monument that overlooks the beach and is surrounded by stones.

Bands from the III Marine Expeditionary Force and Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force played, and the flags of both nations were displayed as a misty rain fell.



(70th Anniversary Continued from page 4)

Then a steady stream of speakers reflected on the battle and what it meant to humanity and themselves.

"I keep in my mind that the peace and prosperity we enjoy now were built upon the many noble sacrifices of the war dead," said Japanese House of Representatives member Yoshitaka Shindo, whose grandfather, Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi, was garrison commander of Iwo Jima during the battle. "And I would also like to renew my resolve to make further efforts for the peace and stability of the world through cooperation between Japan and the United States who now form a firm alliance."

Japan's Minister of Defense Gen Nakatani, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and Marine Corps commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford Jr. also spoke.

"Today, the United States and Japan are interdependent. Through cooperation in everything from international security to free trade, we depend on one another so that each nation may live in peace and prosperity," Mabus said.

"As partners, we will face the challenges of the future together, but we will never forget the lessons of our past. In trying times, we will invoke the character traits demonstrated here by Japanese soldiers and United States sailors and Marines: honor, courage, and sacrifice."

The speeches were followed by wreath-layings, 30 seconds of silence and a volley of rifle fire.



While the colors were retired, many current Marines



Marines speak with Samuel Holiday, an Iwo Jima veteran and Navajo code talker

mingled and traded stories with the old breed.

"The flag went up [on Suribachi] and everyone started firing their guns in the air, the ships were firing, their whistles were blowing; they were going crazy," recalled Marine veteran Carl DeHaven. "They were like 'The island's secure, we're going to go home.' But that wasn't the case."

DeHaven had the grim task of collecting the dead and wounded and bringing them to either the cemetery or the beach.

"It was a morbid place to go back to because you're used to seeing all the dead laying around and the dead being carried out, and I was responsible for taking a lot of the dead out."



Carl DeHaven entertained us with his harmonica all during the reunion

After the ceremony, a handful of Marines hiked down the dirt road toward Suribachi for a pilgrimage of honor. It took a little over an hour to reach the 554-foot mountain's summit, unfurling and raising the stars and stripes in the same spot where Rosenthal's photo was taken.

(70th Anniversary Continued from page 5)

"I walked down through the sand a little bit, saw a couple of bunkers, then walked up the mountain," Master Gunnery Sgt. Kevin Gascon said after reaching the summit. Meeting his predecessors and hearing their stories had left a major impression.

"I got to shake their hands and talk to them about their experiences. This was the best day in the Marine Corps," he said.



For veterans like Williams and Baker, the battle was still vividly replaying in their memories, and likely will for the rest of their lives. They just hoped the sacrifices of so many were not in vain and that they would continue to be honored after they are gone.

"When he sees Mount Suribachi now, it's going to mean something to this little fella right here," Williams said pointing to his small great-grandson.

"If we had never put Old Glory on Mount Suribachi, it would have been just another campaign. But the fact that we put it up on enemy territory, the flag is what energized everything that took place. Our morale was dragging, we had lost so many guys."

Williams' eyes then twinkled and a smile slowly formed on his face.

"When that flag went up on the 23rd [of February], we got a new spirit. We are going to win this thing. I can still see it, absolutely."

burke.matt@stripes.com

Reunion of Honor Memories

By Mark Stevens

This was my second Iwo Jima Reunion of Honor that I have been privileged to attend, the first one was in 2010 for the 65th Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Between documenting the reunion in photos, arranging interviews and being the Point of Contact for the Press, the fact was not lost on me that this reunion was something very special. Between the Veterans and their families, the Marines, and the Japanese delegation, Iwo Jima was overflowing with people.

The tours on Guam, and the excellent symposium prior to the trip to Iwo Jima, were as usual, very entertaining and informative.



"Woody" Williams
seeing Iwo the first
time since 1945

The highlight of the reunion was the trip to Iwo Jima. I will never forget the looks on the veterans' faces as they peered out the windows of the 737 as we approached Iwo Jima, especially, the faces on those who had not been back since 1945.

Those first steps off of the plane were moving as well. The veterans' emotions swelled up as their feet touched Iwo Jima, some, for the first time in 70 years.

For more info, and photos of the reunion, I encourage you to order a copy of the Reunion of Honor Memory Book. Please send a check for \$19.50 to:

IJAA

13198 Centerpointe Way, Ste. 202
Woodbridge, VA 22193



Leighton Willhite's
first steps on Iwo

A Japanese Flag's Journey

by Dan King

On June 25, 2015 inside the mayor's office at the Tokoname City Hall, Tears welled up in the eyes of 73-year-old Osamu Takimoto as he touched his father's battle flag. The blood stained yosegaki bore his father's name "Yokichi Takimoto" and the inscription, "Prayers for Long Life, Victory in Battle."



Osamu and his older sister Hatsue were five and seven years old when their father died in

the war. "Without our father we were poor and had miserable lives after the war," Osamu said.

The flag's long journey home began over 25 years ago when Jerry Henderson was serving in the US Navy on Oahu. Jerry was given the flag by a friend who noted Jerry's interest in WWII. The friend had purchased it at an estate sale in Washington and it was said to have come from Iwo Jima.

Jerry kept the flag safe and secure for the next couple of decades until a chance meeting in September 2014 with Iwo Jima Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams at the airport in Orlando, Florida. Woody mentioned that he was headed to Iwo Jima the following March and Jerry thought of his flag. Jerry gave the flag to Woody with the request that he return it to the Japanese



Photo 2

family.

On March 21 2015, on the island of Iwo Jima Woody Williams handed the flag to Tsuruji Akikusa, one of the last surviving Japanese combat veterans from the battle.

Akikusa was a Japanese naval radio operator that was sent to Iwo Jima in July 1944 and was captured in May 1945. Tsuruji

Akikusa is the subject of Dan King's book, "A Tomb Called Iwo Jima" that chronicles the firsthand experiences of several Japanese who survived the battle.



Photo 3

Akikusa had joined Military Historical Tours' group on Guam and traveled to Iwo Jima with Woody Williams and many other American WWII veterans. Akikusa was at first apprehensive at being the only Japanese veteran among an American group of nearly 400 people, but was impressed at the warm reception and unexpected amount of respect and kindness he received from everyone both young and old. "The Americans are truly wonderful people," Akikusa said.

Upon returning to Japan, Tsuruji Akikusa attempted to find the dead man's name on both the Japanese Army and Navy Iwo Jima rosters but was unsuccessful. He contacted the Yasukuni Shrine museum with no luck. Had the man really died on Iwo Jima? If not, where to begin looking? The Japanese had troops stationed all over Asia and the Pacific so the flag could have come from one of several hundred thousand men. It looked like a lost cause.

It was then that Akikusa received a letter from Mr. Kazuo Nishimi who heard of Akikusa's quest. Nishimi worked for city hall in Tokoname in Aichi Prefecture. Nishimi recognized the unique family

name and the unusual kanji characters that were used to write it and began pouring over city records until he found the name, Yoji Takimoto. Nishimi then contacted Mr. Hideki Seki, the head of Tokoname City's "Relatives of the War Dead Association" who discovered that Yoji Takimoto was a 36-year-old Chief Petty Officer of ship's engineering who had died in the southern Philippines on the island of Jolo on April 3, 1945.

Who was Yokichi Takimoto? According to records kept by the city and photos in a family album, Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Yokichi Takimoto was serving aboard the cruiser Tenryu in ship's engineering. He was sent ashore to participate in land battles in Shanghai in 1932. Then in 1941, Tenryu participated in the attack on Wake Island and in 1942 in the naval battles of Salvo Island and Guadalcanal.

The American submarine USS Albacore sank the Tenryu on Dec. 18, 1942 but luckily for CPO Takimoto other Japanese ships rescued most of the crew. It is not known to where Takimoto was re-assigned, or how and when he went to Jolo Island in the Philippines, or what was his cause of death.

His two children, Osamu and Hatsue, are grateful to Kazuo Nishimi, Hideki Seki, Woody Williams, Tsuruji Akikusa, and most of all to Jerry Henderson for making that first step in deciding to return the flag.

"It is a miracle that we have been reunited with our father. We can now conduct the proper funeral rites for him. I could have never dreamed of having him back home with us again," said Osamu Takimoto.

"Our father has come home. I wish I could meet the American to thank him in person," said Hatsue (Takimoto) Matsuki.

Tsuruji Akikusa contacted Dan King in May, 2015 informing him that the flag's owner had been identified and his children found. Akikusa asked Dan to please come to Japan to witness the event. Although Jerry Henderson and Woody Williams were both invited to attend the ceremony they both had other pressing matters that prohibited them

from being there. Dan stood in to represent them to the family.

Both Jerry and Woody have received sincere gifts, tokens of gratitude from the children of Chief Petty Officer Yokichi Takimoto.

In Japan, having personal items returned is a deeply emotional and religious affair.

The return of the flag was covered by a half-dozen Japanese newspapers and media outlets that reached several million people who witnessed a selfless act of kindness of a stranger towards two people who couldn't have been more innocent of anything than being kids during wartime.

Does it matter that the flag wasn't taken from Iwo Jima during the war? I think that is a question best left to Osamu and Hatsue.



- - To learn about Tsuruji Akikusa's experiences on Iwo Jima and his life in an American POW camp please read, "A Tomb Called Iwo Jima," available in paperback on Amazon and as an e-book on Kindle.

Photo Captions:

1. Tsuruji Akikusa, Osamu Takimoto, Hatsue (Takimoto) Matsuki and Osamu's wife, June 25, 2015.
2. Yokichi Takimoto with his wife and two children Osamu and Hatsue, circa 1941.
3. . Hershel "Woody" Williams and Tsuruji Akikusa atop Mt. Suribachi on March 21, 2015.
4. Japanese media covering the return ceremony that took occurred at Tokoname City Hall on June 25, 2015.

Filling the Void at Camp Pendleton: Iwo Jima Monument West

By: Laura Dietz

As the plane descended to land on Iwo Jima, an Iwo Jima battle veteran made his feelings known: "It's green. I've never seen it green." Thirty-nine veterans were among some nearly 400 aboard 3 planes to spend most of a day on Iwo Jima. It was the "Reunion of Honor" on the 70th anniversary of the battle.



I took note of the band members evenly divided between US and Japanese musicians. The ceremonies were conducted by the grandson of General Kurabiyashi, commander of Japanese forces. I had to see this island, battle map in hand, touch the sand, and watch as dog tags were placed at the top of Mt. Suribachi in memory of lost family.

What proceeded that led me to Iwo Jima was knowledge that a restored deWeldon Iwo Jima monument (Quantico size) had not sold at auction in NY (failed to meet reserve). I knew immediately that this monument belonged at Camp Pendleton where all those WWII Marines passed through on their way to the Pacific war. This monument should face the ocean where the battle took place. It will become a permanent symbol of American courage and strength on the West Coast. Some 80 million vehicles pass through that area on Interstate 5 every year.

Thus was born "Operation Home of the Brave" that epitomizes Marines' courage and determination as the famous photograph conveys. The Nation in February, 1945, exalted that we were winning, and that years of war might soon be over.

In November 2013, I announced the creation of a 501c3, Iwo Jima Monument West: to purchase, to transport across the US (for Americans to see), to design and build a spectacular permanent home on a

hillside at Camp Pendleton. And in doing so inspire and educate Americans to learn we must "never, never, never forget" this battle.

It is important in any discussion to put this event in context. In 1945 a time without TV, internet, YouTube, etc. the famous photo represented "we were winning". It demonstrated the "American spirit".

To date the design/build competition is awaiting proposals from two distinguished national firms due on September 4, 2015. By mid-October, the Selection Committee which includes Marines, will choose the winning design. Immediately following on Saturday, October 31st we are holding a major fundraiser in

Newport Beach area to which we have invited retired Commandant Jim Amos, General Jim Mattis, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Herschel Woodrow Williams (the youngest to ever be awarded a CMOH), Gene Hackman, actor (USMC retired), and Sgt.Maj. Iron Mike Mervosh to headline the event.

To purchase the monument and transport it across the country we estimate the need for \$1.5-2 million. To take title to the monument needs to happen ideally early next year that will meet our schedule to bring it across country in the spring for Americans to see and tangentially give Marine Corps recruiting offices a huge boost.

This is the right thing to do, especially at this time when our Nation needs reminders of our inherent courage and strength. Who better than the Marines!!!

August, 2015

For information on donating to Iwo Jima Monument West (501c3, fully tax deductible) go to: www.marinesoniwojima.com, or use toll free number: 844-IWO-JIMA, or marinesoniwojima@gmail.com. Check donations (any amount) send to: 3535 E. Coast Hwy, #180, Corona del Mar, CA 92625. Each donors name will be listed on a kiosk at the site in perpetuity.

A Tribute to James Skinner

by Liberty Phillips



In March of 2015 I traveled to the Island of Iwo Jima for the 70th anniversary of the battle with a wonderful group of veterans including veteran James "Jim" Skinner. For one week I had the privilege of talking with him every day and hearing his wonderful stories from his childhood to his triathlons at 90 years of age. One morning we sat down and he showed me pictures from his wartime scrapbook. Pictures of his buddies during the war, girlfriends, training, military life, etc. As we walked through these pictures, he told me stories of hand to hand combat with the Japanese on the Islands of Bougainville, Guam, and Iwo Jima, and showed me a photo taken moments before he killed for the very first time. He spoke frankly to me of the roughness and brutality of his war; a war in which many of his experiences caused him to hold bitterness toward the Japanese 70 years later.

Last week I received the painful news that Mr. Skinner passed away on May 24th, 3 months after our trip, and just two days after his 93rd birthday. It was a privilege to have spent that brief time on Iwo Jima with him.

A few days before our March trip to the island, our group learned that we were to meet one of the last surviving Japanese soldiers from the Battle of Iwo Jima, Tsuruji Akikusa. A pervading theme of this "Reunion of Honor" was forgiveness. After listening to the words of our trip leader, Lt. Gen. Snowden, Mr. Skinner resolved to put aside his bitterness to the Japanese and shake hands with Mr. Akikusa. Afterward, I asked him how he felt

meeting his former enemy. He told me that he felt great peace in his heart to have reconciliation and forgiveness with a former enemy before he died. He had been bitter towards them for 70 years, and it was time to let go. For me to see this complete change in him over the course of a few days was one of the most beautiful signs of redemption and forgiveness I have ever witnessed.



We Lose a Dear Friend and Family Member

by Bonnie Haynes

Cynthia Hammond Touchstone

(November 4, 1951 – May 12, 2015)

On May 12, 2015
IJAA lost Cindy
Hammond Touchstone, a
strong friend, and loyal
supporter. Cindy is the
oldest daughter of Ivan
and Aline Hammond.
Ivan was 5th Marines
JASCO. Ivan survived the
36 days and went home to



marry his longtime sweetheart, Aline. Cindy was the oldest of their five children, Bruce, Claudia, Lynn and Patrick. "She was really my best friend from the day I was born," said Bruce Hammond. "Daddy called us all 'miracle children,' because he thought it was a miracle that he made it through that battle alive and got to come home and have such a wonderful family."

Cindy attended the University of Houston and became a speech pathologist for the Houston Area Schools, and anyone who needed her help, including The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

She volunteered to help the Vietnamese nuns who had taught her as a child. Even with the language Differences, she recognized the difference between speech and language problems, and knew how

To fix them. As Ivan tells it, every week they would try to give her a pay check and every week she would refuse to take it. (A true Hammond.)

Fred and I worked with her, because, like all of the Hammonds, she was right there helping with everything, even when she was the invited guest. Anyone who went to the 5th Marine Division Reunions, or IJAA Symposiums, saw her there, smiling, working, and helping. She had the kind of enthusiasm and energy that made people just want to be around her.

When she was first diagnosed with cancer, Fred spent hours on the phone with Ivan talking, worrying, hoping and praying. Fred had been declared "hopeless" with a rare blood disorder, several years earlier. He was on complete life support and they told us to put the Do Not Resuscitate into place because, "an 83 year old man is not going to make it." I told them we believed otherwise.

With the help of Warren Wiedhahn and all of our USMC friends, Fred survived the odds, again, and went on to write THE LIONS OF IWO JIMA. The doctors called it a "medical miracle." Not unlike Cindy. But Fred, Ivan, Cindy, and the rest of us knew about the Iwo Jima spirit. It really is a source of strength and endurance. At the next IJAA reunion, Fred came in with that Texas smile, and said, "Cindy is here!" I looked and there was this beautiful blonde woman with that great Texas

smile, which is not what brain cancer survivors typically look like. It was a great moment. as Aline Hammond, said, the next seven years of Cindy's life were really a gift, and they were a gift that Cindy gave to all of us.

She was there for the BAR ON THE BEACH STATUE, helping all along the way and at the dedication with the whole family. She was on Iwo Jima with Ivan and his family. She was at our reunions. If something needed doing, Cindy did it.

One year, the bartender for the hospitality suite got sick. So Cindy made drinks. She was a willing jack of all trades. And she had fun doing it all and we always appreciated how much she did. But more than that, we loved and respected her. She was always there for us and we will honor her memory, and move forward with her spirit In our heart.



Cindy's brother Bruce adds the following....

She was sweet, but also stubborn and physically and mentally formidable. Being a practiced athlete

myself, I would place myself in the top 5% or so of athletes in town in baseball, being a high percentage hitter, with a powerful arm, and was quite swift on my feet, as well. Even so, I could not outrun Cindy or beat her up till I was 15. Naturally, by then, my parents told me I could not hit her, I had become too strong. So much for the benefits of being in the off-season football P.E. program. I could drop and give you 60, get up, and not be winded. Weights, running, and isometrics. As for swift of feet, though, Cindy was junior Olympic material - I was not swift enough to be in that class. And I wasn't a slow guy! Cindy was amazing and formidable.

The order of the nuns who taught us school was Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. You got that right. There were not any Vietnamese nuns who taught us, they were all Irish then; however, there are now Vietnamese nuns in the order, and of course, Cindy refused to take any money for her speech therapy sessions. She told me how sweet the Vietnamese nuns were.

We had visited the retirement home a couple of times before, and I remember Cindy repeating, "We need to go again." My parents, Cindy, and I attended the funeral of our first grade teacher, a nun, who taught us at Our Lady of Fatima School in Texas City. We were the only students of Sister Frederick's who showed up, which surprised me a bit, since Houston is so close to Texas City. These were ladies who gave their entire lives in the service of teaching or administering schools. We never quite saw all the nuns who taught us, as one or two were in different buildings in the sprawling complex.

One of our teachers, sister Michelle, who eventually was our school principal, attended Cindy's memorial mass, and exhorted me after mass to pray, and to ask my sister to pray for me. (A common misconception is that Catholics pray to saints, and they may even use those words to describe it, but technically, we are asking them to pray for us.)

Their retirement home is the Villa de matel, and the link for it is here : (I'm overdue for another visit.)

Cindy was always eager to celebrate any happy occasion of family members and friends : she rejoiced along with them. Our adopted daughter, who is resented by at least one sibling and her

family, said that Cindy always made her feel welcome. Cindy was no stranger to some of the intrigue instigated by a couple of inlaws, but she lavished attention on all the grand nieces and nephews, regardless of who they belonged to. As you might infer, I am a bit guarded with some of my in-laws. But I'm too busy with constructive projects to waste time on negative emotions. Cindy towered above all that - naturally.

I returned from an overseas trip around my birthday two years ago, and Sandy arranged a party for me at



a beautiful restaurant on the San Bernard River. Cindy wanted to dance, and made me get up to dance with her. You can see she is wearing a Run for the Rose T-shirt, an event she participated in every year, to raise funds for the Dr. Marne Rose Foundation.



The photo of Cindy holding a baby? That one is Roxanna's new baby, Nathan. Roxanna is our adopted daughter.

That's all I wanted to add. She loved sharing in others' joy.

Semper Fi!

Bruce Hammond

AN INTRODUCTION TO TWO OF OUR NEWEST STAFF

Director of Business Development

BIOGRAPHY

RAUL A. SIFUENTES

Raul Arturo Sifuentes, also known as "Art", joined the Marine Corps Reserves during his junior year in high school and entered active duty upon graduation in 1957. Following his active duty tour as a reservist in 1st ANGLICO, Corporal Sifuentes received an Honorable Discharge and migrated to Tyler, Texas in 1959 to enter Tyler, Jr. College. Two years later he transferred to Stephen F. Austin State College in Nacogdoches, Texas.



During his junior year in 1963, he married his college sweetheart, Jeanette Everett.

Upon graduating from college in 1964 Art elected to return to the Marine Corps. Following OCS he was commissioned a 2nd Lt with an aviation option and entered Naval Flight training. 2nd Lt Sifuentes received his Wings in April, 1966. His career includes combat tours in Southeast Asia, various squadron billets in operations, logistics and maintenance with duty stations on east and west coast to include several shipboard cruises plus the normal USMC professional schools. He was qualified and flew various USMC helicopter and fixed-wing models and types of aircraft amassing over 3,000 flight hours.. Major Sifuentes received a Masters Degree from University of Northern Colorado via an off-duty education program in 1975 while stationed at Kaneohe, Bay, HI. Major Sifuentes commanded the 28th Company at the US Naval Academy from 1975 to 1978 and was the Executive Officer and later promoted to LtCol as

Commanding Officer of HMH-462 (CH-53D) at 3rd Marine Air Wing, Tustin, CA from 1979-1982. LtCol Sifuentes' final tour of duty was as the Training Officer for the Chief of Naval Air Training, Corpus Christi, TX from where he retired in 1985.

LtCol (Retired) Sifuentes was hired by Boeing Helicopters in Philadelphia, PA where he was employed from June of 1985 to June of 1995. He held various executive positions to include Manager, International Marketing (Mid-East); Manager, Business Development for V-22 Tilt-rotor aircraft; Program Manager, CH-46 Sea Knight; and Director, International Marketing (Mid-East, Northern Africa, Spain and Mexico). Art elected to take advantage of a Boeing's Early Retirement Program in 1995 and following a consulting period, he became Director of Marine Corps Programs for Rolls-Royce, North America, Inc. in 1999 until 2005 in the Washington, DC area. In 2005 until January of 2015 Art served as the Executive Director of The Marine Corps Aviation Association in Quantico, VA.

Art and Jeanette reside in Dumfries, VA and have two grown daughters and one grandson residing in Wilmington, DE.

Director of Communications

BIOGRAPHY

MARK W. STEVENS



Mark Winfield Stevens graduated from high school in 1972 with aspirations to be a photographer and journalist, but after one year of college, he decided to follow in his brothers footsteps and pursue a career in engineering.

In 1974 Mark and his high school sweetheart Glorene Simpson were married and set off to College Place, Washington to pursue their degrees and start a family.

Upon graduating from Walla Walla College with a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering, Mark went to work for The Boeing Company in Seattle, WA.

Mark started off his career as Senior Lead Manufacturing Engineer responsible for the development and production of the 767, B-1B and B-2 Avionics, and soon found himself in management overseeing a Manufacturing Engineering organization responsible for the manufacturing development of the B-1B, B-2, F-22, and other classified programs.

In 1990 Mark moved into Program Management, responsible for administration of all aspects of Manufacturing, including cost, schedules, and staffing for the design and fabrication of the electronics on the F-22, RAH-66, and Space Station Freedom Programs.

In 1993 Mark became the Manufacturing Avionics Project Manager on F-22 responsible for the oversight of Manufacturing Operations, including cost, schedules, and production readiness for the electronics design and fabrication of Power Supplies and the Radar on the F-22 program.

Mark's father was a veteran of WWII and part of the occupation of Japan. This sparked an intense interest in the War in the Pacific and in 1995 Mark became the Secretary/Historian for the 7th Fighter Command Association WWII. The 7th Fighter Command was the fighter wing of the 7th and 20th Air Force in the Pacific. Elements of the 7th landed on Iwo Jima on March 7th, 1945, and promptly started supporting the Marines with close air support.

In 2006 Mark was elected as the President of the 7th Fighter Command Association WWII, tasked with the oversight and operational responsibilities of the association, including reunions, communications with membership, and authoring and maintaining the association website. (www.7thfighter.com) In addition, he was tasked to collect and maintain historical material (photos, film, and memorabilia) for the association for the eventual donation to an appropriate museum.

It became apparent to Mark that work was interfering with his passion for promoting and

preserving the memories and sacrifices of veterans of the 7th Fighter Command, and at age 55, he retired from the Boeing Company.

In 2009, John Powell spoke at one of the 7th Fighter Command Reunions, and John convinced Mark that he needed to visit Iwo Jima. In 2010 Mark and Glorene joined MHT for the 65th Anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima. Mark also started attending the IJAA Symposiums in Washington D.C., and in 2014 when an opportunity presented itself, Mark applied to fill the very big shoes of Ray Elliott as the Director of Communication for IJAA, and the rest as they say is history.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Addresses Joint Session of Congress

In the first address to a joint session of Congress by a Japanese leader, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had this to say about our Chairman Emeritus: LtGen Larry Snowden, on April 29, 2015:

“Late Enemy, Present Friend. Ladies and gentlemen, in the gallery today is Lt. Gen. Lawrence Snowden.

Seventy years ago in February, he landed on Iōtō, or the island of Iwo Jima, as a captain in command of a company.

In recent years, General Snowden has often participated in the memorial services held jointly by Japan and the U.S. on Iōtō.

He said, and I quote, “We didn’t and don’t go to Iwo Jima to celebrate victory, but for the solemn purpose to pay tribute to and honor those who lost their lives on both sides.”

Next to General. Snowden sits Diet Member Yoshitaka Shindo, who is a former member of my Cabinet. His grandfather, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, whose valor we remember even today, was the commander of the Japanese garrison during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

What should we call this, if not a miracle of history?

Enemies that had fought each other so fiercely have become friends bonded in spirit.

To General Snowden, I say that I pay tribute to your efforts for reconciliation. Thank you so very much.



IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA 71ST ANNIVERSARY REUNION & SYMPOSIUM

FEBRUARY 17-21, 2016

ARLINGTON, WASHINGTON, DC & QUANTICO, VA

Schedule of Events :

Wednesday, 17 February

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

Thursday, 18 February

7:30am—8:00am Reunion Registration Open
8:30am—3:00pm National Museum of the Marine Corps
5:00pm—10:00pm Hospitality Room Open

Friday, 19 February

7:30am—8:00am Reunion Registration Open
8:15am Board Bus for Marine Barracks 8th & I
9:00am—11:00am 71st Commemoration Memorial Service
11:00am—12:30am Lunch Marine Barracks 8th & I
1pm—1:45pm Wreath Laying Ceremony at the WWII Monument
2pm—2:45pm Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Marine Corps War Memorial
3:30pm Return to Hotel Sheraton Pentagon City
5:00pm—6:00pm Reunion Registration Open
6:00pm—8:00pm Hospitality Room Open

Saturday, 20 February

8:30am—3:30pm Symposium and Panel Discussion
12:00pm—1:00pm Lunch briefing by a **Senior Marine Representative**
5:00pm—6:00pm Cash Bar Reception
6:00pm—11:00pm Official Banquet invited GOH **37th Commandant of the Marine Corps**

Sunday, 22 February

Farewells and Departures

P.O. Box 680 Quantico, VA 22134

703-212-8128 / Director@Iwojimaassociation.org / www.Iwojimaassociation.org



IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA REUNION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

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/ijaa2016. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **January 20, 2016**. 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 ☐ Revision/Addition ☐

CUT-OFF DATE IS 1/20/16	Price Per	# of People	Total
TOURS			
Thursday, 2/18: National Museum of the Marine Corps	\$ 43		\$
Friday, 2/19: Memorial Service, Wreath Laying Ceremonies & Lunch at 8th & I	\$ 54		\$
MEALS			
SATURDAY: SYMPOSIUM LUNCH	\$ 38		\$
SATURDAY: BANQUET (<i>Please select your entrée below</i>)			
Sliced London Broil	\$ 48		\$
Chicken Piccata	\$ 48		\$
Mandatory Per Person Registration Fee	\$ 15		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME

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 _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

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).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

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) 625-6401 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/ijaa2016

SHERATON PENTAGON CITY HOTEL (formerly Sheraton National) – ARLINGTON, VA
Please call and mention the IJAA Reunion (888) 627-8210 / (703) 571-6602

The Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel is located at 900 S Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204. The hotel is approximately 5 miles away from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) and 27 miles away from Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD). Call the hotel directly for accurate driving directions. The hotel is on high elevation overlooking many Washington, D.C. famous landmarks and is just blocks from the Metro, The Pentagon, Ft. Myer, and Arlington Cemetery. Downtown Washington, The Kennedy Center, Crystal City, and the National Airport are just five minutes away. Complimentary shuttle van service departs every 30 minutes to and from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Metro at The Pentagon, and Pentagon City Fashion Center. The hotel has handicapped accessible rooms which are based on availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your reservation. We recommend that you reconfirm these special requests before arriving at the hotel.

The Sheraton Pentagon City has 408 deluxe guest rooms with individual climate controls; an HD TV with in-room movies, and video check-out. Rooms offer in-room coffee makers, hair dryers, and irons/ironing boards. Guests can enjoy a rooftop indoor swimming pool (9:00am-10:00pm weekdays, 9:00am-9:00pm weekends) and an exercise room. The exercise room features Stairmaster, LifeCycle, and weight resistance equipment. The hotel is offering complimentary parking for all reunion attendees who are registered hotel guests. There are 390 parking spaces available with a six-foot ceiling height. Check-in time is 3:00pm; check-out is 12:00 noon.

The Potomac Restaurant, with seating for over 200 features unique culinary creations for breakfast, lunch, and dinner from prime steak to fresh seafood and exotic desserts, we will dazzle you with the best dining experience in Washington, D.C. Open from 2pm until midnight, the Potomac Lounge, adjacent to the restaurant, offers an inviting and social atmosphere for lunch, dinner or light fare. Catch your favorite game or the latest news on one of two large elevated flat screen televisions or the 42" plasma television positioned behind the bar. When you feel like staying in, you can enjoy a great meal from the privacy of your room with our delectable in-room dining options 6:30am-11:00pm.

Complimentary shuttle service departs every 30 minutes from 5:00am-12:15am to and from Washington-Reagan National Airport. Go to the Ground Transportation area of the airport to catch the shuttle. SuperShuttle offers transportation from Dulles International Airport and Baltimore/Washington International Airport. Please contact them at (202) 296-6662 or (800) BLUE-VAN for more information and/or reservations. Complimentary shuttle service is also available to the Pentagon City Metro Station 5:00am-12:15am.

Oversize vehicles or RVs can park in the hotel's satellite parking lot across the street from the hotel; but if you require RV hook-ups please contact Harmony Place located on 8018 Richmond Road, Alexandria, VA 22306, which is about 8 miles from the hotel. Call (703) 360-4460 for information, reservations, and directions. There are no campgrounds in Arlington County.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call their toll-free number at (888) 441-7575.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO HOTEL -----

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC – HOTEL RESERVATION FORM
REUNION DATES: FEBRUARY 17-21, 2016

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (if available) _____ TELEPHONE # (_____) _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ TIME _____ AM/PM DEP. DATE _____

____ # OF ROOMS NEEDED ____ # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM ____ HANDICAP ACCESS ____ KING BED ____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS

In the event room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

RATE: \$126 + tax (currently 13%)

CUT OFF DATE: 1/26/16; Reservations received after this date will be processed on a space available basis, at prevailing public rate.
CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is cancelled by 4:00pm the day prior to arrival. If guest does not check-in OR has not cancelled their reservation by 4:00pm the day prior to arrival, 1 night's room & tax will be charged to the guest's credit card.

All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

_____ AMEX _____ DINERS _____ VISA _____ MASTER CARD _____ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

Mail to: Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204 Attn:
Reservations or Call (888) 627-8210 and request the IJAA Room Block Rates. Note the IJAA
Rate is available as early as 13 Feb and as late as 24 Feb so come early and/or stay late.

IJAA Symposium & Reunion Register online and pay by credit card!

www.afr-reg.com/ijaa2016

AFR 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 (\$10 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 group registration fee (\$15 per person) and non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$10 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.



IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Thursday, 18 February

Opened to the public on 13 November 2006, the National Museum of the Marine Corps is a lasting tribute to U.S. Marines — past, present, and future. Situated on a 135-acre site adjacent to the Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia, the Museum's soaring design evokes the image of the flag-raisers of Iwo Jima and beckons visitors to its 118,000-square-foot structure. World-



class interactive exhibits using the most innovative technology will surround visitors with irreplaceable artifacts and immerse them in the sights and sounds of Marines in action. Enjoy lunch on your own in the Mess Hall or 18th Century Tun Tavern.

Note: You will be required to pass through a metal detector before entering the museum. There is a lot of walking, so please wear comfortable shoes. 9:00am board bus, 4:00pm back at the hotel

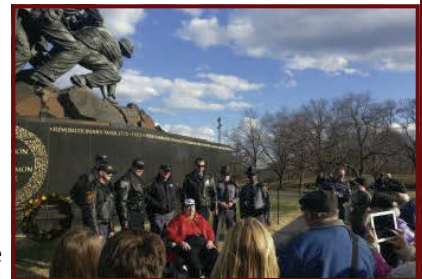
\$43/Person includes bus transportation. Lunch on your own.

71st ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION MEMORIAL SERVICE & MONUMENTS

Friday, 19 February

On the day of the landing on Iwo Jima in 1945 the IJAA will participate with the Department of Defense (DoD) in honoring those brave Veterans of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps who participated in the epic battle of the Pacific War. We'll begin the day with a Memorial Service at Marine Barracks 8th & I to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. We'll enjoy lunch at the Marine Barracks 8th & I. Following lunch we will attend Wreath Laying Ceremonies at both the WWII Memorial and the Marine Corps War Memorial.

There is some walking, so please wear comfortable shoes. 8:15am board bus, 3:30pm return to hotel



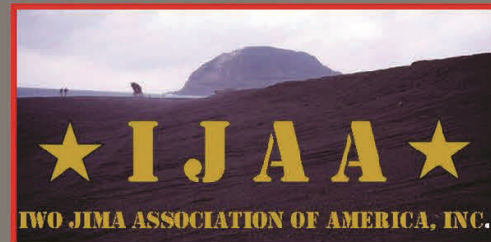
\$54/Person includes bus transportation, escort, and lunch

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

IJAA's 2016 Fund Raiser

Three Great Prizes

1st Prize* M-1 Rifle



M1A, Scout Squad Rifle, —U.S. Rifle Caliber .308
NATO .762 mm with walnut stock. Sells for \$1,800.



*Weapon donated by the IJAA's friend
Bill Randolph of Winchester, VA's*

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

Stonewall Arms, L.L.C.

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 18 Mar 2016.

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 Checks to: IJAA

P.O. Box 680

Quantico, Va. 22134

<p align="center">2016 IJAA Fund Raiser Ticket Win a M1A Scout Squad Rifle Iwo Jima Flag or Patriotic Quilt</p>	<p align="center">Return This Stub</p> <p>Name _____ Street Address _____ City, State and Zip _____ Phone # _____ Email Address _____</p>
<p align="center">2016 IJAA Fund Raiser Ticket Win a M1A Scout Squad Rifle Iwo Jima Flag or Patriotic Quilt</p>	<p align="center">Return This Stub</p> <p>Name _____ Street Address _____ City, State and Zip _____ Phone # _____ Email Address _____</p>
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★ **8 – 14 Dec WWII Exclusive Wake Island 74th Anniversary Return-Guam & Charter Jet to Wake**

27 Feb – 11 Mar '16 VN Tet & Hue City

★ **14 – 21 Mar '16 WWII Iwo Jima-Don't miss it!**

25 Mar – 3 Apr '16 Ireland—100th Anniv of the Easter Rising 1916 Centennial Dublin-Derry-Belfast

9 – 21 Apr '16 VN 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War "Search & Destroy" Ops in I-Corps 1966

19 - 27 Apr '16 Turkey WWI - Gallipoli & Troy

7—20 May '16 VN "Delta to the DMZ"

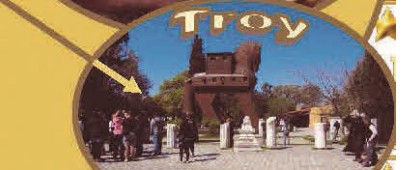
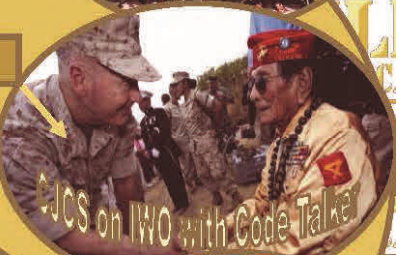
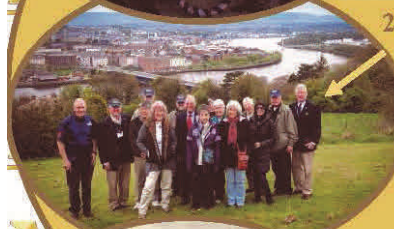
15 – 22 May '16 London

21 May – 1 Jun '16 100th Anniv WWI U.S. Battlefields & Verdun 1916

★ **1 – 9 Jun '16 D-Day: Normandy to Paris**

2 – 12 Jul Russia "WWII Op Barbarossa" Kursk, Moscow & Stalingrad
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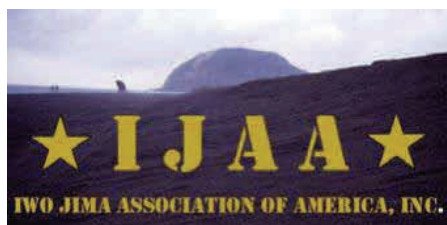
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IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA 2015 FALL NEWSLETTER



FAR LEFT: CMC GEN "JOE" DUNFORD & LTGEN SNOWDEN ON IWO THIS YEAR; LEFT: 5TH MARDIV MEMORIAL ON MT. SURIBACHI'S SUMMIT; ABOVE: WOODY WILLIAMS, MOH FLIES THE EAGLE, GLOBE & ANCHOR ON MT. SURIBACHI.

71ST IWO JIMA "REUNION OF HONOR" 14-21 MAR 2016

The Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) 71st "Reunion of Honor", coordinated by IJAA's travel partner MHT will be headquartered at the Outrigger Resort Hotel

on Guam's Tumon Bay. A chartered United Airline jet will take the veterans, their families, educators, and historians back to the "Black Sands" and the very moving joint commemoration ceremony for the campaign's fallen warriors. There will be an Iwo Jima Battle Symposium & Banquet on Guam before our return. Please join us on the "Black Sands" for a stirring reunion with brethren & family.



PO BOX 680 QUANTICO, VA 22134-0680
703-590-1295 * IWOJIMAREUNION@MILTTOURS.COM
WWW.IWOJIMAASSOCIATION.ORG