



## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY  
MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION  
3078 UPSHUR AVENUE  
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5100

### REPORT OF THE HULY BOARD REVIEW OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE IDENTITY OF THE FIRST FLAG RAISERS ATOP MOUNT SURIBACHI, IWO JIMA

- Ref: (a) Nalty, Bernard C. and Danny J. Crawford. *The United States Marines on Iwo Jima: The Battle and the Flag Raisings*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1995.
- (b) Alexander, Joseph H. *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1994.
- (c) Miller, Bill. "The Whine of Snipers' Bullets Comprised the Only Opposition." Vol. 30, no. 9 (September 1947): 10-11.
- (d) Marling, Karal Ann and John Wetenhall. *Iwo Jima Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- (e) Albee Jr., Parker Bishop and Keller Cushing Freeman. *Shadow of Suribachi: Raising the Flags on Iwo Jima*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995.
- (f) Keene, R.R. "Louis Lowery Captured Leatherneck History on Film." *Leatherneck* Vol. 79, no. 10 (October 2006): 32-33.
- (g) Spence, Dustin. "Unraveling the Mysteries of the First Flag Raising." *Leatherneck* Vol. 79, no. 10 (October 2006): 34-43.
- (h) Thomey, Tedd. *Immortal Images: A Personal History of Two Photographers and the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996.
- (i) Bradley, James with Ron Powers. *Flags of Our Fathers*. New York: Bantam Books, 2000.
- (j) Wheeler, Richard. *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*. New York: Crowell, 1965.
- (k) Conner, Howard M. *The Spearhead: The World War II History of the 5th Marine Division*. Washington, DC: Infantry Journal Press, 1950.
- (l) Wells, John Keith. *Iwo Jima: "Give Me Fifty Men Not Afraid to Die."* Quality Publications, 1995.
- Encl: (1) CMC letter dated 05 July 2016, Precept Convening the Huly Board to Review Information Regarding the Identity of the First Flag Raisers atop Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima [Cover Letter Ref (a)]
- (2) Reference Photographs of the First Flag Raising on Iwo Jima, 23 February 1945 with Annotations Determined by History Division on 01 July 2016.
- (3) Excerpts from "Report of the Huly Board Review of New Information Regarding the Identity of the Second Flag Raisers atop Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima."
- (4) Personnel Determined by History Division on 23 June 2003 to have been Members of the Patrol that Occupied Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945

- (5) Annotated “Gung Ho” Photograph taken by Joe Rosenthal of the Associated Press, 23 February 1945. Defense Media Activity. Accessed 05 July 2016, [http://www.5thmarinedivision.com/uploads/8/1/0/6/8106876/8416758\\_orig.jpg](http://www.5thmarinedivision.com/uploads/8/1/0/6/8106876/8416758_orig.jpg).
- (6) Excerpts, Muster Roll of 2d Battalion, 28th Marines (April 1944; October 1944; January 1945; February 1945)
- (7) Excerpts, Muster Roll of Headquarters Battalion, 5th Marine Division (January 1945)
- (8) Evaluation of Casualty Cards for Company E, 2d Battalion, 28<sup>th</sup> Marines, 5th Division, determined by History Division on 01 July 2016; Casualty Cards for Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, 5th Division, based on February 1945 Muster Roll
- (9) Eyewitness account by PFC Raymond Jacobs
- (10) Excerpts, Muster Roll of 2d Battalion, 27th Marines (February 1945)

### Authority

The Board was convened by CMC Precept letter dated 05 July 2016. [Encl (1)]

### Board Composition

President	LtGen Jan C. Huly, USMC (Ret)
Member	BGen Jason Q. Bohm, USMC, CG, TCOM
Member	Colonel Keil R. Gentry, USMC (Ret)
Member	Colonel Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret), Editor, <i>Leatherneck</i>
Member	Sergeant Major Gary Smith, USMC, SgtMaj, SYSCOM
Member	Sergeant Major David L. Maddux, USMC, SgtMaj, EDCOM
Member	Sergeant Major Richard A. Hawkins, USMC (Ret)
Member	Dr. Sarandis Papadopoulos, Navy Department Secretariat Historian
Member/Recorder	Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer, Director, History Division
Administrative Support	Dr. Breanne Robertson

### Date and Location

The Huly Board convened at the Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA, at 0900 on 05 July 2016. The Board concluded at 1600 on 08 July 2016.

## Preliminary Statement

At the direction of the Commandant of the Marine Corps the Huly Board that analyzed the second flag raising on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, 23 February 1945 reconvened in order to review the photographic evidence and claims related to the identity of the participants in the first flag raising.

In accordance with Enclosure (1), the panel reviewed photographic forensic evidence, photographs, eyewitness statements, and other available evidence related to the first flag raising. To the individuals participating in the Battle of Iwo Jima, the first flag raising was the more significant of the two flag raisings on Mount Suribachi; however, AP photographer Joseph Rosenthal's iconic photograph caused the second flag raising to overshadow the first flag raising event, resulting in less publicity and documentation related to the individuals involved in the first flag raising.

Previous attempts to accurately identify individuals involved in the first flag raising were complicated by the stress of combat, the lack of popular recognition as to the significance of the first flag raising, and the subsequent passage of time. The evidence reviewed by the panel represents an aggregation of years of painstaking research by numerous historians, authors, forensics experts, and others.

## Findings of Fact

1. Current official Marine Corps records identify the first flag raisers as:
  - a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier [Ref (a), (b)]
  - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr. [Ref (a), (b)]
  - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen [Ref (a), (b)]
  - d. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg [Ref (a), (b)]
  - e. PFC Louis C. Charlo [Ref (a), (b)]
  - f. PFC James R. Michels [Ref (a), (b)]
2. Early on the morning of 23 February 1945 LtCol Chandler W. Johnson, CO, 2/28, ordered a team to ascend Mount Suribachi to conduct route reconnaissance and determine enemy disposition on the summit. [Ref (c), p. 11]
3. The individuals who comprised the reconnaissance team on Mount Suribachi were Sgt Sherman B. Watson, Cpl George Mercer, PFC Theodore White, and PFC Louis C. Charlo, all members of F/2/28. [Ref (c), (e) and Encl (2), p. 2]
4. The reconnaissance team encountered no enemy activity on the summit of Mount Suribachi. [Ref (e), p. 41]
5. On 23 February 1945, CO 2/28, LtCol Johnson, ordered XO, E/2/28, 1stLt Harold G. Schrier, to lead a platoon-sized patrol with the mission to secure the top of Mount Suribachi and raise the American flag. [Ref (a)-(b), (d), (j)]
6. At the base of Mount Suribachi 1stLt G. Greeley Wells, battalion adjutant for 2/28, provided an American flag to 1stLt Schrier on orders from the battalion commander prior to the patrol's ascent. [Ref (a), (c), (j)]
7. The patrol led by 1stLt Schrier consisted of 3d Platoon, E/2/28, reinforced by other elements of 2/28, and Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery, a *Leatherneck* photographer assigned to the 5th Marine Division. [Ref (a)-(b), (f)-(g) and Encl (6)-(8)]
8. 1stLt Schrier's patrol departed the base of Mount Suribachi at approximately 0830 and passed the reconnaissance team descending from the summit. [Ref (b), (d), (f) and Encl (2), p. 3]
9. The reconnaissance team returned to F/2/28 at the base of Mount Suribachi shortly after they passed the Schrier patrol proceeding up the mountain. [Ref (d), p. 41]

10. The following individuals have been identified as members of the patrol led by 1stLt Schrier that occupied the summit of Mount Suribachi at approximately 1000:

- a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier [Ref (a), (d), (f), (g), (j), (l)]
- b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr. [Ref (a), (d), (f), (g) and Encl (6), (8)]
- c. SSgt Louis R. Lowery [Ref (a), (d), (f), (g)]
- d. Sgt Henry O. Hansen [Ref (a), (d), (g) and Encl (6), (8)]
- e. Sgt Kenneth D. Midkiff [Ref (d), (j) and Encl (6), (8)]
- f. Sgt Howard M. Snyder [Ref (d), (g), (l) and Encl (6), (8)]
- g. PhM2c John H. Bradley [Ref (d), (g) and Encl (6)]
- h. Cpl Raymond E. Jacobs [Ref (g), (l) and Encl (6)]
- i. Cpl Harold P. Keller [Ref (c)-(d), (j), (l) and Encl (6)]
- j. Cpl Robert A. Leader [Ref (d), (f), (j), (l) and Encl (6), (8)]
- k. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg [Ref (a); (d), (f)-(g); (j); (l) and Encl (6), (8)]
- l. PFC Graydon W. Dyce [Ref (j), p. 140, 143 and Encl (6)]
- m. PFC Clarence H. Garrett [Ref (c)-(d), (j), (l) and Encl (6)]
- n. PFC Thomas J. Hermanek, Jr. [Ref (l), p. 241 and Encl (6)]
- o. PFC Donald S. Howell [Ref (i), p. 203 and Encl (6)]
- a. PFC Raymond H. Larsen [Encl (5), (6)]
- p. PFC James R. Michels [Ref (a), (c)-(d), (f)-(h), (j) and Encl (6), (8)]
- q. PFC Manuel Panizo [Ref (d), (j), (l) and Encl (6), (8)]
- r. PFC James A. Robeson [Ref (c)-(d), (f); (j), (l) and Encl (6), (8)]
- s. PFC Leo J. Rozek [Ref (d), (f), (j), (l) and Encl (6)]
- t. PFC John T. Schmitt [Ref (l), p. 241 and Encl (6), (8)]
- u. PFC Harold H. Schultz [Ref (g), p. 37 and Encl (6)]
- a. PFC Fred J. Walcsak [Encl (5), (6)]
- v. Pvt Kenneth S. Espenes [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6)]
- w. Pvt Robert D. Goode [Ref (d), (l) and Encl (6), (8)]
- x. Pvt Philip L. Ward [Ref (d), (g), (i) and Encl (6)]

11. The following individuals were assigned to 3d Platoon, E/2/28, as of 23 February 1945 but cannot be confirmed as being members of the Schrier patrol:

- a. Cpl James E. Hagstrom [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6), (8)]
- b. PFC Clarence R. Hipp [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6), (8)]
- c. PFC William J. McNulty [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6), (8)]
- d. Pvt Clark L. Gaylord [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6), (8)]
- e. Pvt James D. Breitenstein [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6), (8)]
- f. Pvt Charles E. Schott [Ref (j), p. 143 and Encl (6), (8)]

12. All of the members in the patrol led by 1stLt Schrier cannot be identified due to insufficient evidence. [Ref (a)-(l) and Encl (6)-(8)]
13. When the patrol reached the top of the mountain, its members dispersed along the crest of the crater to occupy security positions while the headquarters element looked for a suitable place to raise the flag. [Ref (d), (j)]
14. Cpl Robert A. Leader and PFC Leo J. Rozek found the pipe to which the first flag was affixed. [Ref (d)-(f); (j), (l)]
15. SSgt Lowery photographed the preparation of the first flag. [Ref (d), (e), (f), (l) and Encl (2), pp. 4-8]
16. The following individuals affixed the first flag to the pipe:
  - a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier [Ref (d)-(f); (j) and Encl (2), pp. 4-7]
  - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr. [Ref (d)-(f); (j) and Encl (2), pp. 4-7]
  - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen [Ref (d)-(e); (j) and Encl (2), pp. 4-7]
  - d. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg [Ref (d)-(e); (j) and Encl (2), pp. 4-7]
  - e. Pvt Philip L. Ward [Ref (g), p. 35 and Encl (2), pp. 4, 7]
17. The flagpole was carried horizontally for a short distance from the place where it was prepared to the location where it was raised. [Ref (e), p. 39]
18. The following individuals were either touching or within reach of the flagpole just prior to the first flag being raised:
  - a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier [Encl (2), p. 8]
  - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr. [Encl (2), p. 8]
  - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen [Encl (2), p. 8]
  - d. PhM2c John H. Bradley [Encl (2), p. 8]
  - e. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg [Encl (2), p. 8]
  - f. Pvt Philip L. Ward [Encl (2), p. 8]
19. The first flag was raised on the summit of Mount Suribachi at approximately 1030. [Ref (a-l)]
20. SSgt Lowery was reloading the film in his camera as the first flag was being raised. [Ref (d), (e)]

21. No photographs or film are known to exist that depict the actual raising of the first flag. [Ref (a)-(l) and Encl (2)]
22. SSgt Lowery resumed taking photographs of the first flag immediately after it was raised. [Ref (d)-(f), (g) and Encl (2), pp. 9-15]
23. The following individuals were in contact with the flagpole on the summit of Mount Suribachi immediately after the first flag was raised:
  - a. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr. [Encl (2), pp. 9-10, 15]
  - b. Sgt Henry O. Hansen [Encl (2), pp. 9-13, 15]
  - c. PhM2c John H. Bradley [Ref (g) and Encl (2), pp. 9-15]
  - d. Pvt Philip L. Ward [Ref (g) and [Encl (2), pp. 9-15]
24. Immediately after the event, LtCol Johnson and 1stLt Schrier communicated via radio regarding the first flag raising. [Encl (2), pp. 11, 13-15 and Encl (9)]
25. The following individuals provided support in the immediate vicinity of the first flag raising:
  - a. Sgt Howard M. Snyder, Security [Ref (g), (j) and Encl (2), pp. 9-10, 13-15]
  - b. Cpl Raymond E. Jacobs, Radio Operator [Ref (g), (l) and Encl (2), pp. 9-15]
  - c. PFC James R. Michels, Security [Ref (g)-(h), (j) and Encl (2), pp. 12]
  - d. PFC Harold H. Schultz, Security [Ref (g), p. 37 and Encl (2), pp. 9-14]
  - e. PFC James A. Robeson, Security [Ref (c), (f); (l)]
26. Of the photographic evidence available to and reviewed by this panel, none show PFC Charlo in the vicinity of the first flag as it was being raised. [Encl (2)]
27. A patrol led by Capt Arthur H. Naylor, Jr., CO, F/2/28, and consisting of members of F/2/28 ascended the summit to reinforce security after the first flag raising and prior to the second flag raising at approximately 1300. [Ref (e), p. 46]
28. All of the members in the patrol led by Capt Naylor cannot be identified due to insufficient evidence. [Ref (a)-(l)]
29. LT Charles F. Suver, CHC, USNR, and his assistant, Sgt James E. Fisk, ascended the mountain after the first flag raising and prior to the second flag raising. [Ref (d), pp. 42, 53 and Encl (2)]

30. In addition to the above, the following individuals were present on the summit after the first flag raising and prior to the “Gung Ho” photograph taken immediately after the second flag raising by AP photographer Joseph Rosenthal:

- a. Sgt William H. Genaust [Encl (2), p. 16; (3), (7)]
- b. Sgt Michael Strank [Encl (3), (5)]
- c. Sgt Sherman B. Watson [Ref (d), p. 41]
- d. Cpl Harlon H. Block [Encl (3)]
- e. PFC Louis R. Burmeister [Ref (e), pp. 62-66 and Encl (2), p. 18]
- f. PFC George Burns [Ref (e), pp. 62-66 and Encl (2), p. 16]
- g. PFC Louis C. Charlo [Ref (d), p. 41 and Encl (2), p. 18]
- h. PFC Rene A. Gagnon [Encl (3)]
- i. PFC Ira H. Hayes [Encl (3), (5)]
- j. PFC Franklin R. Sousley [Encl (3), (5)]
- k. PFC John R. Thurman [Encl (5), (10)]
- l. PFC Theodore White [Ref (d), p. 41]
- m. Pvt Robert W. Campbell [Encl (2), p. 16; (3), (7)]
- n. Civ Joseph J. Rosenthal [Encl (2), p. 16; (3)]



## Opinions

1. The following six individuals raised the first flag:
  - a. 1stLt Harold G. Shrier [FF 1, 5, 6-8, 10, 12, 15-19, 22]
  - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr. [FF 1, 7-8, 10, 15-19, 22-23]
  - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen [FF 1, 7-8, 10, 15-19, 22-23]
  - d. PhM2c John H. Bradley [FF 7-8, 10, 17-19, 22-23]
  - e. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg [FF 1, 7-8, 10, 15-19, 22]
  - f. Pvt Philip L. Ward [FF 7-8, 10, 15-19, 22-23]
  
2. The following individuals did not raise the first flag as previously indicated in the official historical record of the Marine Corps:
  - a. PFC Louis C. Charlo [FF 1-3, 8-9, 13, 20-22, 26]
  - b. PFC James R. Michels [FF 1, 7-8, 10, 13, 20-22, 25]
  
3. Although PFC Charlo did not raise the first flag, he was a member of the reconnaissance team prior to the first flag raising and later returned to the summit as security reinforcement prior to the raising of the second flag. [FF 2-4, 8-9, 13, 20-22, 26]
  
4. Although PFC Michels did not raise the first flag, he provided security in the immediate vicinity of the event. [FF 5, 7-8, 10, 13, 20-22, 25]
  
5. PFC Michels was previously identified as a participant in the first flag raising due to his prominent positioning in the photograph taken by SSgt Lowery immediately after the event. [FF 1, 13, 20-22, 25]
  
6. There may be additional members of the patrol led by 1stLt Schrier, but they cannot be identified due to insufficient evidence. [FF 5, 7-8, 10-12, 30]
  
7. There may be additional members of the patrol led by Capt Naylor, but they cannot be identified due to insufficient evidence. [FF 27-28, 30]
  
8. Additional individuals may have been present on the summit during the flag raising events on 23 February 1945, but they cannot be identified due to insufficient evidence. [FF 1-30]

## Recommendations

1. That the records of Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps reflect the identification of the individuals in the first flag raising as follows:
  - a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier
  - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr.
  - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen
  - d. PhM2c John H. Bradley
  - e. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg
  - f. Pvt Philip L. Ward
  
2. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should inform the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and Medical Officer of the Marine Corps of the results of this panel before they are made public.
  
3. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should inform the appropriate relatives of 1stLt Harold G. Schrier, PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr., Sgt Henry O. Hansen, Cpl Charles W. Lindberg, PFC Louis C. Charlo, PFC James R. Michels, Pvt Philip L. Ward and PhM2c John H. Bradley of the results of this panel before they are made public.
  
4. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should issue a public statement regarding the correct identification of the first flag raisers. This statement should include acknowledgement of the collective efforts of all who contributed to telling the story of the sacrifices and heroic achievements of all Marines, Sailors and Coast Guardsmen during the battle of Iwo Jima.
  
5. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps recognize that all previous efforts at identification were conducted in good faith and that no official blame be assessed for previous inaccuracies in the historical record.
  
6. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps direct that this panel report and associated records be deposited in the Marine Corps History Division's archives.
  
7. That the Office of Legislative Affairs should inform appropriate Members of Congress and congressional staff of the results of this panel before they are made public.
  
8. That Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps should make public the findings of this panel.

9. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should coordinate the public release of the findings of this panel with the Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication.

(b)(6)

JAN C. HULY  
LtGen, USMC (Ret)  
President of the Board

(b)(6)

JASON Q. BOHM  
BGen, USMC

(b)(6)

KEIL R. GENRY  
Colonel, USMC (Ret)

(b)(6)

MARY H. REINWALD  
Colonel, USMC (Ret)

(b)(6)

GARY SMITH  
Sergeant Major, USMC

(b)(6)

DAVID L. MADDUX  
Sergeant Major, USMC

(b)(6)

RICHARD A. HAWKINS  
Sergeant Major, USMC (Ret)

(b)(6)

SARANDIS PAPADOPOULOS  
PhD, Navy Department Secretariat Historian

(b)(6)

CHARLES P. NEIMEYER  
LtCol, USMC (Ret)  
PhD, Director, History Division