

# INVESTIGATING IWO

*The Flag Raisings in Myth, Memory, & Esprit de Corps*

Contributing Editor  
Breanne Robertson



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*Contributing editor*  
*Breanne Robertson, PhD*



Marine Corps History Division  
Quantico, Virginia  
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# FOREWORD

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Most Americans, whether they are familiar with World War II history or not, recognize the photograph taken by Associated Press photographer Joseph Rosenthal of the flag raising on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima on 23 February 1945. For many decades, this image was thought to be of five U.S. Marines and a Navy corpsman, and it captured the nation's patriotic spirit and unflagging commitment to final victory. With wide distribution in magazines, newspapers, posters, and postage stamps, the image inspired renewed patriotism and resolve among war-weary viewers on the American home front. Imprinted in the collective memory of veterans and the general public, the Iwo Jima flag raising became one of the most memorable scenes from U.S. history alongside George Washington crossing the Delaware River and the Spirit of '76. Yet, while Rosenthal's photograph remains one of the most reproduced images in our history, surprisingly little has been written about its cultural impact on how the war has been remembered and how the U.S. Marine Corps has been viewed, both historically and in the present day.

As the young son of a Marine stationed at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, in the early 1950s, the Iwo Jima statue located outside the main gate was one of my first memories. That image and

the pride and spirit it invoked played no small role in influencing me to pursue a Marine Corps career. One can only imagine the impact this iconic image has had on numerous others over the past years. In reading this book, you will see how Breanne Robertson and the other authors also have recognized the significance of the flag-raising image in countless lives and events that go well beyond that day in 1945.

Due to the presentation of new research and careful observations of amateur historians, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert B. Neller, directed the Marine Corps History Division in 2016 and 2019 to form investigative boards to evaluate the evidence and correct the record regarding the actual participants who raised the flag atop Mount Suribachi. I will admit that when asked to form and lead this undertaking in 2016, and prior to perusing the evidence, many of the board members and I were somewhat dubious at first of the purpose and value of the effort. After all, countless testaments declared, previous investigations verified, books described, statues sculptured, and movies depicted who the participants were. How could they all have possibly been in error for so long? But after meticulous study, discussion, review, and careful deliberation of the evidence

available to us for more than three weeks, our panel was able to provide, beyond all reasonable doubt, the correct identification and position of those who participated in raising the flags atop Mount Suribachi. This book is the result of efforts to record these findings as well as to allow readers to fully explore the cultural meaning of an iconic photograph that has, in many ways, come to represent the feelings Americans have about Marines, the Corps, and World War II.

Breanne Robertson, the editor of this book, served as a recorder for our board's deliberations and had first-hand knowledge of our efforts. I had the chance to work with her while overseeing the work of the 2016 board and then again in 2017 when she organized a symposium about the findings. The Bowers Board began its work by sharing the additional claims received via Major General Orlo K. Steele with former Huly Panel members and Brigadier General William J. Bowers, who went on to oversee the 2019 proceedings. Robertson carried forward her accumulated knowledge and experience with the Huly Panel as a full member of the most recent board. In *Investigating Iwo*, she encourages us to explore the connection between American visual culture and World War II, particularly how the image inspired Marines, servicemembers, and civilians to carry on with the war and to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure vic-

tory over the Axis Powers. Chapters by Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer, Colonel Douglas E. Nash Sr., Dr. Melissa Renn, Dr. Austin Porter, Dr. David W. Mills, Dr. Kate Clarke Lemay, Dr. John Moremon, Dr. Yui Suzuki, Stephen Foley, Dustin Spence, Christopher B. Havern Sr., Criss Austin, Colonel Mary H. Reinwald, Colonel Keil Gentry, Dr. Breanne Robertson, and Paul Westermeyer shed light on the processes through which history becomes memory and gains meaning over time. The contributors ask only that we be willing to take a closer look, to remain open to new perspectives that can deepen our understanding of familiar topics related to the flag raising, including Rosenthal's famous picture, that continue to mean so much to us today.

Marines are known for doing things correctly, including detailed documentation of our history. The 2016 and 2019 investigations were important to the Corps' legacy and our nation's history in our quest to ensure that those who participated and sacrificed so much are properly and correctly recognized to the best of our knowledge at the time. This book helps further understanding of just how important the proper documentation of this historic event is to our heritage. I represent all of those who participated in these boards in conveying how honored we are to have had the opportunity to correct the record.

*Jan C. Huly*  
*Lieutenant General*  
*U.S. Marine Corps, Retired*

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# PREFACE

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Along my morning commute from Washington, DC, to Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, I pass no fewer than three iterations of the iconic Iwo Jima flag raising: Felix de Weldon's monumental bronze statue in Arlington Ridge, Virginia; the National Museum of the Marine Corps' architectural homage overlooking Interstate 95; and another, more modest version of de Weldon's design—this one in limestone—installed at the entrance to base. Some days, the number of sightings climbs even higher, such as when temporary mile markers dot the streets in preparation for the Marine Corps Marathon or roadside placards announce the annual Modern Day Marine military exposition. The famous battlefield scene, captured originally by Associated Press photographer Joseph J. Rosenthal, shows six servicemen raising the American flag atop Mount Suribachi during World War II. It is a familiar image to most Americans; yet, its prevalence and prestige among military circles has made it nearly synonymous with one Service branch, in particular: the United States Marine Corps. Thus, when two amateur historians produced compelling evidence suggesting that an error in attribution had been made—that the official lineup of flag raisers was wrong—the matter was serious.

I was a relatively new hire in the Marine Corps

History Division in late 2015, when then-director Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer received a professional forensic photographic analysis report detailing discrepancies in equipment, uniform, and physiognomy among the individuals presumed to be pictured in the flag-raising photograph. Although I did not yet know it, my education and experience as an art historian—an admittedly unorthodox background for a career in military history—meant that I would soon take part in the historical reevaluation of one of the most meaningful emblems of the Corps. That spring, the then Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert B. Neller, ordered an impartial investigation to evaluate new evidence suggesting that the long-established roster of flag raisers was incorrect. The meetings took place during several weeks in April and again in July, at which time active and retired Marine officers, enlisted servicemembers, and military historians scrutinized details of one of the signature events in Marine Corps history. My assigned role in these proceedings was to provide administrative and research support, although my participation quickly grew to include making queries and visual observations as well. After much deliberation, the members of the Huly Panel, named for the leadership of Lieutenant General Jan C. Huly (Ret), concluded that Private

First Class Harold H. Schultz, a Marine previously unacknowledged in historical accounts of the flag raising, was present in Rosenthal's photograph of that event. The panel further recognized the need to reevaluate the first flag raising and recommended revisions to that official lineup, as well.

In February 2017, the Marine Corps History Division hosted a symposium at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico to announce the updated roster of flag raisers and facilitate public dialogue about the history and meaning of the flag-raising events. The impressive breadth and quality of those presentations convinced me that an edited volume offered the best publication format to correct the official record. Dr. Neimeyer agreed, and much of the present publication took shape during the following year and a half. In that time, I had the privilege of working with several authors whose chapter contributions herein expand on their symposium talks. Additional essays from my colleagues at Marine Corps History Division, Naval History and Heritage Command, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and from universities around the globe broadened the scope of the project to include writings about the other Service branches; the cultural process by which Rosenthal's photograph accrued meaning during and after World War II; and international perspectives on the Iwo Jima flag raising and its role in both public and private commemorations of the war.

The manuscript for this book was nearly complete when, in late summer 2018, three amateur historians—one previous researcher along with two new collaborators—furnished photographic evidence supporting the claim that yet another error in attribution had occurred. The imagery provided to the Marine Corps was persuasive, and the Commandant determined that the supposition merited a closer look. Paul J. Weber, then-acting director of the Marine Corps History Division, tasked me with leading the preliminary research in preparation for another board. During the next six months,

I worked alongside Marine Corps University colleagues Colonel Keil R. Gentry (Ret) and Master Sergeant Stacy M. Patzman (Ret) to conduct an exhaustive review of primary and secondary source materials related to the Iwo Jima flag raisings. As participants in the 2016 Huly Panel proceedings, Gentry and I were keenly aware of the challenges inherent in reconstructing an event that had transpired nearly 75 years ago. The research team undertook careful study of the film, still photography, oral history interviews, and written records in collections from Texas to Iowa to Maine. To aid in the endeavor, the Marine Corps also enlisted the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to perform forensic photographic analyses.

In February 2019, General Neller again convened an impartial board to adjudicate whether the official flag-raising roster was in error. The Bowers Board, named for chairman Brigadier General William J. Bowers, brought together active duty and retired Marine officers, enlisted servicemembers, and military historians from across Marine Corps University to reassess the participants in Rosenthal's photograph. Like their predecessors on the 1947 del Valle Board and the 2016 Huly Panel, the members resolved to achieve historical accuracy to the extent that the archival record and modern technology would permit. I served as recorder for the board once again, but my role would be extended. My prior experience with the Huly Panel and the expertise that I had gained in the intervening years permitted me to represent the Marine Corps History Division as a full-fledged member for this board. After more than three months of deliberation, the Bowers Board concluded that the official list of names—already twice corrected—had overlooked the participation of Corporal Harold P. Keller in the second flag-raising event.

This publication, precipitated by the 2016 Huly Panel and 2019 Bowers Board investigations, aims to correct the official record with regard to the first and second flag raisings on Iwo Jima; however,

it does not claim to be the final word on the subject. Rosenthal's photograph has long fascinated and troubled us. Defined as much by its complicated past as by its signature imagery, the raising of the American flag on Mount Suribachi remains a subject of intense scholarly interest and popular debate. How many flags did the Marines plant that day? Where did the flags come from, and what was their true motivation for swapping them out? How many photographers were present on the mountain, and what can we learn from their work? What qualifies an individual as a flag raiser? And most importantly, what does our continuing fascination with the event say about our identity, our values, and our evolving relationship with the past?

Embracing the contested narratives and layered meaning that enrich Rosenthal's photograph, this volume presents a multivocal collection of 14 essays. It originated with "The Iwo Jima Flag Raisings: Discoveries and Interpretations," a symposium organized by the Marine Corps History Division and held at the National Museum of the Marine Corps on 23 February 2017 as a forum to discuss persistent misconceptions and evolving scholarship. I am pleased to note that this book features chapters from many of these symposium presenters, as well as selected contributions that fill gaps or explore related themes. Organized roughly chronologically into four sections covering the realities of war, reception on the home front, reconstructions through archival evidence, and the continuing resonance of the Iwo Jima flag raising in the present day, these essays are intended to provide a collective snapshot of our current understanding and appreciation for the events that occurred atop Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945.

This book—and the symposium from which it arose—benefited from the intelligence and generosity of many contributors. On behalf of the Marine Corps History Division, I am delighted to have partnered with historians and archivists from the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait

Gallery, the National Park Service, and the National Archives, as well as academic scholars and independent researchers from around the globe, in this important undertaking. Representing years of accumulated research across a range of academic and professional disciplines, the authors bring diverse perspectives that permit us to fundamentally reconsider the impact of Rosenthal's image on American culture both at the time of conflict and in the years afterward. Furthermore, I would like to recognize and thank the following individuals and institutions for their collaboration, encouragement, and support: Lieutenant General Jan C. Huly (Ret); Brigadier General Jason Q. Bohm; Brigadier General William J. Bowers; Brigadier General Robert C. Fulford; Colonel Keil R. Gentry (Ret); Colonel Mary H. Reinwald (Ret); Colonel Dave E. Severance (Ret); Sergeant Major Douglas F. Cutsail III; Sergeant Major William J. Grigsby (Ret); Sergeant Major David L. Maddux (Ret); Sergeant Major Gary Smith; Sergeant Major Justin D. LeHew (Ret); Sergeant Major Richard A. Hawkins (Ret); Master Sergeant Stacy M. Patzman (Ret); Dr. Randy Papadopoulos; Dr. Renee Ater; Dr. Sally M. Promey; Dr. Richard W. Vorder Bruegge and Brian K. Brooks at the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Charles R. Bowery and Jon T. Hoffman at the U.S. Army Center of Military History; Shannon Schwalb, Adria Olmi, and Rodney Foytik from the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at the Army War College; Charles Zoeller at the Associated Press; Criss Austin, Rutha Beamon, Michael Bloomfield, Kaitlyn Crain-Enriquez, Holly Reed, Daniel Rooney, and other members of the motion picture and still picture reference teams at the National Archives and Records Administration; Owen Conner, Joan Thomas, Patrick Mooney, and Alfred Houde at the National Museum of the Marine Corps; Aaron LaRocca, Brent O'Neill, and Sarah Gulick at National Park Service; Patty Everett at *Leatherneck*; the late Jack T. Paxton from the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association; Justin Gamache, cura-

tor at the Wright Museum of World War II in New Hampshire; John Allen at Signature Communications; Tim Evans at Smithsonian Channel; Linda Briscoe Myers at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin; Joshua Larkin Rowley at Duke University; Shelby Rodriguez at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Leslie Squyres at the Center for Creative Photography at University of Arizona; Jason A. Knowles at Fentress Architects; Jenna Wakely at Tourism Australia; Stephen Foley; Dustin Spence; Brent Westemeyer; Kay Keller Maurer; Kenneth Smith-Christmas; Margery Wheeler Mattox; Louise Miller; Parker Bishop Albee Jr.; Keller Cushing Freeman; Bonnie Arnold Haynes; Ray Elliott; Marianne Ingleby; Rodney K. Brown; Jeffrey Koterba; Viv Martin; the librarians and staff at the Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University; National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Marine Corps Heritage Foundation; Marine Military Academy; Hakes.com; Fifth Marine Division Association; and the Iwo Jima Association of America.

Because my participation on the Huly Panel began during my first year with the Marine Corps History Division, I have joked that the experience served as my acculturation training for better understanding the military. In truth, I am indebted to my campus colleagues who responded enthusiastically to my desire to know more about a hallowed symbol of the Corps. I especially wish to thank Charles Neimeyer, whose decision to include me in the Huly Panel investigation first ignited my curiosity on the subject, and Paul Weber, who directed me to lead the historical charge in advance of the Bowers Board investigation. Dr. Edward T. Nevglowski assumed the directorship of the Marine Corps

History Division when the Bowers Board deliberations were already underway. His embrace of this research and publication endeavor aided tremendously in ushering the book to press. In the History Division, my colleagues Army Colonel Douglas E. Nash Sr. (Ret); Dr. Fred Allison; Dr. Seth Givens; Paul Westermeyer; Annette Amerman; and Kara Newcomer were knowledgeable supporters of my initial proposal, and I have frequently drawn on their generous expertise. National Museum of the Marine Corps colleagues Lin Ezell, Charles Grow, and Christina Johnson were enthusiastic collaborators for the symposium. Dr. James Ginther and Alisa Whitley provided help navigating the collection at Marine Corps History Division's Archives Branch, and I am grateful to Ross Phillips, Taylor Sorrells, Travis Wakeman, and Peter Owen for their research assistance throughout the project. At Marine Corps History Division/MCU Press, my sincere thanks goes to Dr. Alexandra Kindell, whose enthusiasm and editorial guidance were indispensable in the early stages of this book, and Angela Anderson, who shepherded this volume to publication.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my family, who showed unflagging support for the book. I am especially grateful to my parents, Keith and Donna Robertson, and to Shannon and Peter Ford; Justin Robertson and Kara Weyand; Chin-Sung and Li-Young Chen; Ann-Lee Chen; Ron and Deanna Tarlton; and Dennis and Patt Davis. They have been a constant source of encouragement and a reminder of the myriad ways that military service inflects everyday life—often in unexpected ways. My final thanks go to my husband, Ray, and our son, Kai, for being with me along the journey. Your love and encouragement mean the world to me.

*Breanne Robertson, PhD*  
*Marine Corps History Division*

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# IWO JIMA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR HISTORICAL TRUTH

## *An Introduction*

by *Breanne Robertson, PhD*

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When Stephen Foley phoned the Marine Corps History Division in October 2013, the Irish amateur historian had already devoted months to studying photographs and books about the Battle of Iwo Jima. He had long been fascinated with Associated Press photographer Joseph Rosenthal's photograph of six servicemen raising the American flag, and his careful examination yielded some surprising observations. The famous image—believed to depict five Marines and one Navy corpsman—revealed that it did not portray anyone carrying the distinctive olive drab canvas bags that medical personnel used to carry their instruments and supplies into battle. The Wexford native sought to alert the U.S. Marine Corps to this discrepancy, since it potentially signaled an error in the official roster of flag-raising participants. Was it possible that Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John H. Bradley, the Navy corpsman whose wartime experiences inspired the bestselling book *Flags of Our Fathers*, was not in the photograph? An employee of the History Division took down Foley's contact information and, as far as the Irishman could tell, the matter was dropped.<sup>1</sup>

Two and a half years later, Foley received an email from a Marine Corps public affairs officer thanking him for his research contributions, which had greatly assisted the Service in its formal inves-

tigation of the Iwo Jima flag raising. Another message soon followed, this one from Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer, then-director of Marine Corps History Division. Neimeyer explained that General Robert B. Neller, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, had convened an impartial panel to evaluate the evidence and determine the identity of the flag raisers in Rosenthal's photograph. Not only did the panel's findings support Foley's initial hypothesis—that Bradley was not present in the image—but the Marine Corps informed him that it was conducting a follow-up investigation to verify the identity of the individuals who had raised the first flag as well.<sup>2</sup> Foley's research played a limited role in the second panel's proceedings, but the conclusions were equally profound; in July 2016, the Marine Corps announced a revised lineup for the initial flag raising.<sup>3</sup>

The announcement attracted widespread attention. Major U.S. newspapers and magazines ran stories about the historical fact-finding mission and speculated about the reasons such errors had gone unnoticed—or, at least, unremarked on—for more than 70 years and even whether some dark conspiracy to conceal the flag raisers' identities had occurred.<sup>4</sup> Since the spring of 1945, when Rosenthal captured the patriotic planting of the flag on a



FIGURE 0.1

*Editorial cartoonist Jeffrey Koterba offers humorous commentary in response to the 2016 Huly Panel investigation, which corrected the identification of PFC Harold Schultz as a second flag raiser in the historical record. The cartoon shows a Marine waving a banner inscribed with the words “The Truth” as he catches up to the tableau made famous by Associated Press correspondent Joseph Rosenthal’s photograph.*

*Courtesy of Jeff Koterba, Omaha World-Herald*

remote Japanese battlefield, his photograph has embodied the collective effort and democratic ideals of the United States. The photograph circulated on postage stamps and war bond posters during World War II and later inspired a bestselling book, several movies, and Felix de Weldon’s monumental design for the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia. Countless reenactments and parodies have appropriated the flag-raising scene as a wordless comment on contemporary issues encompassing partisan politics, international policy, and social activism (figure 0.1).<sup>5</sup> The pervasive presence of the Iwo Jima flag-raising image in popular culture, and the high visibility and regard for the event that re-

fects on the Marine Corps especially, begs several questions, most notably: How were the mistaken attributions made in the first place? And why did it take so long to correct them?

Tracing the confusing and oft-contested history of Rosenthal’s well-known photograph, this volume aims to unpack the convoluted means by which the past has been reconstructed. The collection of essays acknowledges the messiness of war and the fallibility of remembrance and examines the ways in which meanings and perceptions form—and reform—over time. In doing so, this book sheds light on the particular challenges facing veterans, military families, and scholars who strove for histori-

cal accuracy in support of the official U.S. Marine Corps decision to update the historical personages depicted in Rosenthal's photograph.

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When six Marines gathered around the length of Japanese pipe scrounged on the summit of Mount Suribachi, an extinct volcano on the southern tip of Iwo Jima, the battle for the island represented only the latest stepping stone in the Americans' protracted island-hopping campaign against Imperial Japan during World War II. The importance of the island to American strategy rested with its strategic bombing campaign against Japan. Because Iwo Jima lay only 650 miles from the Japanese mainland, its fighter aircraft based on the island posed a tactical threat to U.S. pilots flying long-range bombing missions against Tokyo, the imperial capital. American military leadership determined that the seizure of the island served a dual purpose; it would curtail Japanese defensive capabilities and secure additional airfields for Allied operations in the Pacific.<sup>6</sup> Just five days into the fierce and costly fight, U.S. commanders ordered a platoon of Marines to scale Mount Suribachi and secure its summit. On 23 February, Marines of Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, began the strenuous climb up the steep, rocky terrain to the top of the mountain. To their considerable surprise, the Marines found their ascent to the crater relatively uncontested; they quickly established a security perimeter and accomplished their assigned task of raising the flag. Their collective effort lasted no more than a few seconds; yet, in that brief time, Joe Rosenthal, a civilian photographer working for the Associated Press, captured one of the most famous images of the war (figure 0.2). With its patriotic theme and compositional precision, the image soon superseded the historical event it depicted to inspire a war-weary nation.

Within days, Rosenthal's photograph of the flag raising became a sensation on the home front, reproduced innumerable times in newspapers across the United States. Within one month, it had

attained mythic status. Still today, the moment remains transfixed in our cultural memory about the Greatest Generation and World War II. It is not hard to understand why; the photograph remains a notable example of the power of the visual image. On the surface, the photograph of six battle-weary Marines straining to raise the American flag conveys a message of unity, strength, and victory. The flagpole, captured at an ideal 45-degree angle, mimics the jagged, war-torn landscape and slices a broad expanse of sky. With their backs to the camera, the men remain anonymous, their individual identities subsumed by their patriotism and their shared commitment to the task. Above, a stiff breeze unfurls the American flag in a triumphant declaration of battlefield conquest.

The speed and popularity by which the photograph assumed prominence on the home front obscured the historical circumstances surrounding the taking of the photograph itself. In actuality, the flag raising did not signal anything like victory for the American servicemen fighting on the island of Iwo Jima. After all, the flag raising occurred mere days after the Marines made landfall, and the battle was far from over; the conflict would go on for another 31 days and thousands more Americans would die before the island was declared secure.

Marines stormed the beaches of Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945. With 110,000 Americans unloading from 880 ships, the D-day assault was the largest amphibious landing in the Central Pacific to date. The Japanese defenders proved a formidable foe. Under the command of Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, Japan's mining engineers had converted the remote island into an underground fortress. Laborers blasted 16 miles of tunnels, connecting underground hospitals, supply rooms, and other chambers to more than a thousand fortified bunkers and artillery and antiaircraft batteries. Although the U.S. Army Air Forces and Navy had conducted the longest sustained aerial bombardment of the war against Iwo Jima, the as-



FIGURE 0.2

*On 23 February 1945, Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal snapped his famous picture of six Marines raising the U.S. flag on Iwo Jima. Americans first saw the image as a wirephoto on the front pages of newspapers on 25 February. The photograph became an instant media sensation and earned Rosenthal a Pulitzer Prize.*

Joseph J. Rosenthal photograph, courtesy of the Associated Press

sault had little impact on the island fortress, constructed as it was below its surface of volcanic rock. As a result, the conquest of Iwo Jima extracted a staggering toll from the landing force. In 36 days of fighting, U.S. troops suffered 24,000 casualties, including nearly 7,000 killed.<sup>7</sup>

The flag raising—a brief interlude in a long, brutal campaign—combined with the stress and urgency of combat as well as the passage of time have made the process of recovering facts a challenging endeavor. Soon after Rosenthal’s photograph hit the newspapers, President Franklin D. Roosevelt re-

called the surviving “flagmen” to participate in the Seventh War Loan drive.<sup>8</sup> The public relations assignment was intended to imbue fundraising efforts with an air of heroism, just as Marine Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, who received the Medal of Honor for his actions at Guadalcanal, had done during the 1943 War Loan Campaign. But securing an official identification of the flag raisers and arranging their transfer to Washington, DC, proved a difficult task. Before the battle ended, three of the men believed to be in the photograph—Sergeant Henry O. Hansen, Sergeant Michael Strank, and



FIGURE 0.3

*This photograph of the first flag raising, taken by SSgt Louis R. Lowery, became the signature image depicting that earlier event. The prominent position of PFC James R. Michels, who can be seen gripping his M1 carbine at the lower right, resulted in his misidentification as a flag raiser until the Hully Panel proceedings corrected the official record in 2016.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by SSgt Louis R. Lowery, courtesy of *Leatherneck*

Private First Class Franklin R. Sousley—were killed in combat. Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John Bradley was severely wounded and evacuated to Guam for medical treatment. Of the six, only Privates First Class Rene A. Gagnon and Ira H. Hayes remained unscathed five weeks later, when the telegram arrived ordering the servicemen portrayed in the famous flag-raising image to return to the United States.

Making matters worse, Rosenthal's image did not capture the only time, or even the first instance, when an American flag was raised on the summit. As amateur historians Stephen Foley and Dustin Spence remind us in their essay, a patrol led by Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier ascended Mount Suribachi, secured the crater, and planted another

flag earlier that same day. During their ascent, the Marines had anticipated sniper fire or a sudden attack from caves or machine gun emplacements. They remained visible on the face of the mountain, and Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and sailors watched their progress from the shores and ships below. When the patrol reached the rim of the volcano unopposed, they improvised using a section of water pipe that had been part of a Japanese cistern, selected a site near the top of the cone, and raised the American flag (figure 0.3). Cheers arose among the troops and a number of Navy ships sounded their horns in celebration. Many men wrote about the moment in their diaries and in letters home. But as memorable and important as this event was to the men fighting on the island, it remains virtually unknown to the general public, even today.<sup>9</sup> Instead, Rosenthal's photograph depicting the replacement of this banner with a larger one captivated the collective imagination of Americans far from the Pacific battleground.

Almost as soon as Rosenthal's photograph appeared in newspapers, American journalists and readers began to speculate about the identities of the men pictured below the flag. Confusion was perhaps inevitable under these circumstances. Weeks earlier, combat correspondents on Iwo Jima had requested names and personal interviews with the flag raisers, but these efforts centered on the men who had raised the first flag, not the second. CBS reporter Don Pryor interviewed Platoon Sergeant Ernest I. Thomas Jr. on board the flagship USS *Eldorado* (AGC 11), where the young Marine received congratulatory handshakes from U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner and Marine Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith shortly after the first flag was raised (figure 0.4). The radio broadcast never aired due to technical difficulties, but similar reports from the front touted the first flag raising and served as the basis for newspaper articles published back in the states. Meanwhile, the Associated Press, Rosenthal's employer, developed the photograph of the

second flag raising and wired it via telephoto equipment from Guam to the United States in time for it to appear on the front page of newspapers on Sunday, 25 February. The development and transmittal of Marine Corps combat photographs, by contrast, typically took several weeks. Because the standard military procedure bundled film from Iwo Jima into a weekly courier trip for processing on Guam, the first photographic negatives related to the flag raisings were not entered into the U.S. Marine Corps Pacific Negative Logbook until early March.<sup>10</sup> The resulting press coverage combined the first and second flag raisings into a single event. The *New York Times*, for example, published a written account identifying Thomas as a flag raiser in the same issue carrying Rosenthal's photograph on its front page. Although the story noted that the "small flag was supplanted soon by a larger one on a high staff," readers would have been justified in thinking that Rosenthal had photographed Thomas hoisting the American flag depicted on page 1 as the newspaper did not specify which flag raising—the original or the replacement—the Marine sergeant had helped to erect.<sup>11</sup>

*Time* magazine correspondent Robert Sherrod believed he had a major scoop in early March, when he reported that the famous flag-raising image depicted the *second* time an American flag had been planted on Mount Suribachi and that Marine cameraman Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery was the only photographer present for the first one.<sup>12</sup> This information led to charges that Rosenthal's photograph was staged. There is ample evidence to show that this was not the case, but the persistence of such theories reveals an essential truth: the history of this image—captured in the midst of war—is a messy one.

Rosenthal's image has long fascinated and troubled us. To be sure, the characteristics that imbue the photograph with such a powerful visual force—its dramatic sense of action, patriotic sentiment, sculptural clarity, and perfectly timed compo-



FIGURE 0.4

*LtGen Holland M. Smith, commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, congratulates PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas Jr. for his role in the assault on Mount Suribachi. Thomas helped raise the first American flag to be planted on the summit and came aboard the flagship USS Eldorado (AGC-11) the next morning for a nationwide broadcast with CBS correspondent Don Pryor. On 3 March, Thomas was killed by enemy rifle fire on the north end of Iwo Jima. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for demonstrating extraordinary heroism at the base of Mount Suribachi on 21 February 1945.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo 112098 by Cpl Art Kiely Jr., National Archives and Records Administration

sition—are the same traits that bred confusion and even conjecture that the scene must have been carefully posed. In truth, the replacement flag had nothing to do with Rosenthal but rather was dispatched on orders from Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson for greater visibility to the men fighting below. As Sergeant Michael Strank put it, the larger flag had to be raised so that "every son of a bitch on this whole cruddy island can see it."<sup>13</sup> Whereas the first flag measured only 54 x 28 inches, the second was nearly twice that at 96 x 56 inches. Notably, even the motivation for the flag swap is disputed,



FIGURE 0.5

*When the Associated Press headquarters in New York wired a congratulatory note to Joe Rosenthal for his remarkable image of the flag raising, the photographer did not know which of his pictures had created such a sensation and initially assumed it was the posed photograph of Marines and Navy corpsmen gathered beneath the flagpole. For Rosenthal, the portrait of cheering servicemen embodied the teamwork and enthusiasm of the World War II battle cry “Gung Ho,” an anglicized pronunciation of the Chinese phrase *gōng hé* meaning “work together.” Thus, when someone asked if the photograph had been posed, Rosenthal answered yes.*

Joseph J. Rosenthal photograph, courtesy of the Associated Press

and rumors have long swirled among Iwo veterans that the second flag raising occurred because Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal wanted the original flag for a souvenir.

The immediate resonance of the photograph confused even Rosenthal, who initially gave conflicting answers about the staging of the composition because he had not yet seen the image and instead replied with the so-called “Gung Ho” group

portrait in mind (figure 0.5).<sup>14</sup> It was in this context in late March that the Marine Corps undertook the hasty identification of the flag raisers to fulfill President Roosevelt’s directive. Touted as heroes, the flag raisers commenced a nationwide tour as living embodiments of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz’s tribute to those who served on Iwo Jima: “uncommon valor was a common virtue.”<sup>15</sup> Gagnon, Hayes, and Bradley became household names, as did their

now-fallen comrades Strank, Sousley, and Hansen, whose gold-star mothers made public appearances in support of the loan drive as well. By the summer of 1946, however, it had become evident that the Marine Corps had made an error in attribution. Belle Block, the mother of deceased Marine Corporal Harlon H. Block, claimed that her son was pictured in Rosenthal's famous photograph. Surviving flag raiser Ira Hayes agreed, and penned a letter of support to Mrs. Block. When this letter leaked to the press, the Marine Corps responded with an official investigation to settle the matter once and for all. From December 1946 to January 1947, the del Valle Board, so-called for its chair Major General Pedro del Valle, reviewed field reports, gathered signed affidavits, and conducted interviews with Marines involved with the event. Significantly, the board's findings confirmed the participation of Corporal Harlon Block and revised the official roster of raisers in Rosenthal's famous flag-raising picture (see appendix A).

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Fast forward to 2013, when amateur historian Stephen Foley contacted the Marine Corps History Division. Rich in associations and running deep with myth and experience, Rosenthal's photograph had become a national icon; its persistent appeal and continuing reproduction made it a fixed moment in the collective memory of many Americans—even if they were not alive during World War II. Thus, for the staff at the Marine Corps History Division, Foley's query was nothing new. The federal historians routinely received phone calls and letters from friends, family members, and occasionally veterans themselves claiming to possess information about—or even to be—an unacknowledged flag raiser. The History Division is particularly wary of individuals or organizations seeking to exploit the popularity of the Iwo Jima event for personal gain. Stolen valor is a real concern, unfortunately, as are disingenuous filmmakers or authors who aim to tarnish the mil-

itary or, even worse, the memory of a particular servicemember, to sensationalize their story.

The Marine Corps considers all 70,000 of the Marines, sailors, and Coast Guardsmen who fought at Iwo Jima to be heroes. As such, the Corps and its historians have had little incentive to pursue the personal identification of any Marine pictured in the photographs from that day, as this would unfairly privilege one's proximity to a largely symbolic event over the unparalleled bravery and grit demonstrated by every Marine fighting on the front lines below. Moreover, the Marine Corps already conducted an in-depth investigation into the identity of the flag raisers concluding in 1947. The results of the del Valle Board rested on interviews and documentation collected in the immediate aftermath of the war. There was little reason to doubt the veracity of these findings, and even less reason to think that an inquiry so many decades removed from the event would yield better insights.

For many years, it was common practice in the Marine Corps History Division to answer all public inquiries about the Iwo Jima flag raising with the official identifications determined in 1947. In some cases, the claims received no response at all.<sup>16</sup> For private researchers, such a response can be confusing and infuriating. And indeed, Foley sought out new audiences and collaborators in the interim. He began working with Eric Krelle, a military buff who runs the 5th Marine Division website. Through the meticulous study of still photography and motion picture film from that day, Foley and Krelle noted significant discrepancies in the uniform and equipment carried by the individual previously identified as Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John Bradley, whose pistol and medic pouches contrasted sharply with the standard gear of a Marine infantryman, and in November 2014, the *Omaha World-Herald* published an article detailing their findings.<sup>17</sup> The article in turn generated interest from Matt Morgan, a former Marine public affairs officer, who approached Krelle about producing a documen-

tary for the Smithsonian Channel. As part of the documentary project, Morgan hired two forensic analysts to evaluate Foley and Krelle's observations using digitally enhanced photographs of the flag raising, and he shared these reports with the Marine Corps in late 2015.

The following spring, the U.S. Marine Corps undertook an official review of the evidence and concluded that the long-accepted roster of flag-raising participants was incorrect. Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John H. Bradley had been erroneously identified in Rosenthal's photograph. The investigation determined that a previously unknown Marine, Private First Class Harold H. Schultz, is pictured in the iconic scene instead (see appendix B).

The enthusiasm with which Rosenthal's photograph circulated and accrued meaning during the Second World War set in motion a series of individual actions and events whose tangled legacy historians are still working to unravel. The publication and wide distribution in newspapers and magazines not only distinguished Rosenthal's photograph as one of the most celebrated and most frequently reproduced images of the war, it also clouded popular understanding of the flag-raising event, its participants, and its visual record.

The recent correction to the official record serves as a reminder that the photograph, despite its iconic status, remains an artifact, a material object whose surface interaction of light and chemicals produced a visual imprint of an actual historical moment. In conjunction with written reports and eyewitness statements, this primary source material has corroborated and enriched our knowledge of that day. The potential rewards are great—such as the 2006 recognition of Private Philip L. Ward and Private First Class Raymond E. Jacobs as members of the first flag-raising party—but so are the challenges posed.<sup>18</sup> As Criss Austin shows, the physical nature of these materials requires careful custodianship and conservation or they will deteriorate

over time. Imperfections within the picture, such as blurriness, positioning, and shadow, further limit the information that scholars can glean from these objects. The mute testimony of these images may remain ambiguous, leaving historians to speculate on the particularities of a scene. And yet, the opposite is also true. As visual evidence generated in the midst of combat, photographs and motion pictures can exhibit a clarity that prompts the reconsideration of accepted knowledge.

Today, the Marine Corps History Division takes a different approach to the continuing stream of letters and phone calls about loved ones purportedly helping to raise the flag. The division takes each query seriously and attempts to provide each person with a definitive answer, even when the records do not support family lore. Of the dozens of queries the division receives each year, the majority involve a Marine whose muster roll indicates that his company or regiment was fighting elsewhere on the island. For those assigned initially to a replacement battalion, it is more difficult to reconstruct their movements during the course of battle. In this instance, the History Division concludes that the individual's claim is plausible but inadequately supported to insert into the official record. But in light of the 2016 investigation, Marine Corps historians humbly acknowledge that technology is always evolving and that new evidence may yet come to light.

Such was the case in the summer of 2018, when amateur historians Dustin Spence, Stephen Foley, and Brent Westemeyer approached the Marine Corps with another proposed correction to the identifications associated with the second flag raising. General Robert Neller, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, convened another impartial board to determine the participants in Rosenthal's image in light of this new photographic evidence. As part of the investigation, the Marine Corps extended its prior research to include written correspondence, oral history interviews, and archival

motion picture and photographic materials at the National Archives, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Associated Press, Wright Museum of World War II, and in private collections. The Service also received assistance from the FBI's Digital Evidence Laboratory to conduct forensic photographic analyses in support of the identification effort. In the spring of 2019, an official Marine Corps panel led by Brigadier General William J. Bowers, President of Marine Corps University, adjudicated the evidence and recovered the heretofore unknown contributions of Corporal Harold P. Keller as a second flag raiser (see appendix D).

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Already recognized as a remarkable photograph embodying the collective spirit of Americans at war, Rosenthal's image has also attained a measure of notoriety for the repeated corrections made to its historical record. Since issuing its first press release identifying the servicemen on 9 April 1945, the Marine Corps has remained committed to honoring its servicemembers by ensuring historical accuracy. On three separate occasions, the Service has responded to new information by conducting official investigations, and in every case, the Corps determined that a revision to the official list of flag raisers was required. How did errors creep into the initial identification? And why did it take so long—and so many attempts—to uncover the truth?

The essays in this volume attempt to grapple with these questions. The title, *Investigating Iwo: The Flag Raisings in Myth, Memory, & Esprit de Corps*, is derived from the trio of official Marine Corps investigations that have corrected the roster of individuals pictured in Rosenthal's flag-raising photograph. Essays by Colonel Mary Reinwald (Ret), member of the 2016 Huly Panel, and Colonel Keil R. Gentry (Ret), member of the 2016 Huly Panel and the 2019 Bowers Board, describe the recent research, analyses, and deliberations that led to the naming of not one, but two previously unacknowledged flag

raisers. Providing an insider perspective into the process by which official history is made—and remade—these essays reveal the thoughtfulness and dedication of numerous individuals and institutions who aided in the effort to “get it right.” But theirs are only the latest developments in a long and complicated history. Examining the depth of feeling that viewers around the globe have attached to Rosenthal's image, as well as the contradictory narratives surrounding its capture, this volume aims to unravel the meaning and legacy of the Iwo Jima flag raising in public memory and Marine Corps culture.

The essays that follow are organized in four parts. In Part I, “In the Cauldron of War,” four writers consider the wartime context of Rosenthal's photograph and the evolution of its meaning in relation to war news coverage, government fundraising, and commercial advertising. Part II, “Memory and Meaning,” probes national identity formation and memory construction as it took shape in distinct regions and among specific social groups. A critical reexamination of the archive is the focus of Part III, “Recovering the Past.” Essays in this section aim to restore the historical significance of the first flag raising, counter false narratives that have grown up around both raisings, and offer a clearer view of the evidence currently available to researchers and how it has twice overturned the official Marine Corps record. Part IV, “Legacy,” shows how Rosenthal's photograph operates as a shorthand symbol of American national identity and military prowess and questions how the recent identifications of Corporal Keller and Private First Class Schultz might impact the prevailing symbolism of the image by underscoring its more modest reality. Although many of the individual essays have a relatively narrow focus, as an aggregate, they begin the process of forging an overall perspective of the event that encourages the reader to draw connections across chapters, to reconsider popular assumptions about the flag raisings, and to reflect on the events' appeal

to Marines, civilians, and scholars both historically and in the present day.

## IN THE CAULDRON OF WAR

The authors in this initial part of *Investigating Iwo* describe the battlefield context and home front response to Rosenthal's photograph that continue to shape our understanding of events on 23 February 1945. As Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer writes in "Black Sand and Blood: The 36-day Battle for Iwo Jima, 19 February–26 March," the battle for Iwo Jima was a grueling and costly campaign for the U.S. Marine Corps. The capture of Mount Suribachi and the raising of the American flag on its summit occurred just four days after the initial landings; the battle itself would continue for another four weeks. For the servicemen who fought on the island and for the Marine Corps as a whole, Iwo Jima represents the largest amphibious landing operation up to that date. It holds the singular distinction of incurring the most casualties of any battle in Marine Corps history, and more Marines received the Medal of Honor for their actions during the campaign than for any other battle in U.S. history. The U.S. Army, who shared with their fellow servicemembers the unenviable task of neutralizing the Japanese threat on Iwo Jima, joined the battle on 21 March 1945 and performed mopping-up operations until the end of July 1945. They accomplished this, writes Army Colonel Douglas E. Nash (Ret) in "Going to 'Tojo's Front Door': Recalling the U.S. Army's Role and the Flag Raising at Iwo Jima," with unrelenting courage and resolve and staged a flag-raising ceremony of their own on a neighboring island.

On the home front, Rosenthal's photograph emerged as the singular image of the Battle of Iwo Jima. The immediate proliferation and popularity of the photograph seems natural in hindsight, but the response was unprecedented; the image stands as one of the first contemporary media sensations

in the United States. Dr. Austin Porter describes how the publication and wide distribution in newspapers and magazines distinguished Rosenthal's photograph as one of the most celebrated and most frequently reproduced images of the war. His essay, "Raising Flags, Raising Funds: Promoting the 'Mighty Seventh' War Loan," traces popular media responses to the Iwo Jima flag raising against the backdrop of the Seventh War Loan drive. Considering artist C. C. Beall's adaptation of the battlefield photograph for the war bond campaign and further iterations of the scene in wartime commercial advertisements, Porter draws attention to the cultural process by which the photograph transcended its historical referent to become a visual icon. Not all media outlets leapt at the opportunity to publish Rosenthal's photograph, however. In "*Time*, *Life*, and the Flag Raisings on Iwo Jima," Dr. Melissa Renn examines wartime journalistic coverage of the Iwo Jima flag raisings and looks at how *Time* and *Life* magazines' editors responded to war correspondent Robert Sherrod's allegation that Rosenthal's photograph had been staged. In marked contrast to other American publications, *Time* and *Life* delayed publication of the popular image until late March and offered readers a critical framework for interpreting the scene through visual comparison with Staff Sergeant Louis Lowery's lesser-known photograph of the first flag raising.

## MEMORY AND MEANING

The essays in Part II, "Memory and Meaning," reflect on both the meaning and malleability of the Iwo Jima flag raising after the war. In her chapter on the Marine Corps War Memorial, Dr. Kate Clarke Lemay recounts the circumstances surrounding the construction of this monument in the immediate postwar years. Lemay directs her analysis toward the process of the nation's decision making, its collaboration with the sculptor, and the location and symbolism of the monument on Arlington Ridge,

across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. Her thoughtful examination also foregrounds an inherent tension in sculptor Felix de Weldon's design, which aspired to reproduce historical specificity and portrait likeness in its depiction of the Iwo Jima flag raising, yet also worked to transcend both in its desire to commemorate all Marines who have perished in battle since 1775. The visual culture of public-minded military community is likewise the subject of Dr. David W. Mills' essay, "Did Joe Rosenthal Save the Marine Corps?: The Existential Fight, 1943–52." The ubiquitous iconography of the Iwo Jima flag raising and Marine honor guard during the Freedom Train exhibition, writes Mills, formed key visual components of postwar civil patriotism that popularly wed the Marine Corps to American identity in the face of rising tensions and imminent threats to national unity in the Cold War era.

As Dr. John Moremon's essay in this volume suggests, monuments perform a powerful role in articulating national difference in the cultural landscape. In "Another Country's Flag, Another Country's Servicemen: Rosenthal's Photograph and Commemoration of the U.S. Marine Corps in Australia and New Zealand," Moremon explores the relevance of the Iwo Jima flag raising to other nations involved in the Pacific theater, namely Australia and New Zealand. As Moremon notes, distinct social sectors in different geographical regions forged national memories in opposition, and interaction with, the American message. Whereas American narratives of the Pacific War have privileged U.S. fighting over the contributions of Allied forces in the region, Rosenthal's photograph operates abroad more as a symbol of the postwar ascendancy of the United States as a world power. Consequently, national narratives of World War II in New Zealand and Australia barely register that the U.S. Marine Corps had a wartime presence in either country, despite both nations hosting U.S. Marines in the early stages of the war. Arguing that memorial space is politically motivated and historically and

socially constructed, Moremon demonstrates how the commemorative landscape in New Zealand and Australia forgo Rosenthal's photograph in favor of modest plaques, which local populations mounted in tribute to the personal relationships their communities formed with the Americans who trained on their shores.

While Moremon, Lemay, and Mills examine the public side in the visual fabrication of meanings, Dr. Yui Suzuki focuses on how individuals use monuments in the private construction of memorialization and grief. Her essay, "How the Iwo Jima Memorial became a Personal Mortuary Monument for My Japanese Mother," reflects on her family's experience of the Battle of Iwo Jima and the solace her mother found in laying flowers at the Marine Corps War Memorial. There is no doubt that the memorialization described by Suzuki helps expand the commemorative function of the war memorial, which has historically been confined to honoring the memory of U.S. Marines. For many spectators, the Arlington memorial stands not only for U.S. Marines but for all American war dead. As Suzuki makes clear, even this expanded definition is too narrow. For the relatives of a Japanese soldier who perished in the Battle of Iwo Jima, the Marine Corps War Memorial offered a more fitting mortuary tribute than the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, Japan.

## RECOVERING THE PAST

The five chapters in this part of *Investigating Iwo* reflect on the increasingly vital role visual evidence has played in contemporary methodology and interpretation. In their chapters on combat photographers Staff Sergeant Louis Lowery and Sergeant William Genaust, respectively, independent researchers Dustin Spence and Stephen Foley and motion picture archivist Criss Austin demonstrate how photography and motion pictures operate as historical documents in their own right and how, in conjunction with written reports and eyewitness

statements, these primary source materials can corroborate and enrich our knowledge of that day.

Spence and Foley, in “A Flag for Suribachi: The First and Forgotten Flag Raising on Iwo Jima,” remind us that it was the first American flag raised on the summit of Mount Suribachi that carried meaning for the servicemen fighting on Iwo Jima. At the time, this flag raising was the more significant of the two. The second flag raising was a nonevent, at least to the participants, except that a photographer snapped an opportune image. Their essay recounts this lesser-known event to highlight the contributions of the Marines whose actions that morning lifted the spirits of thousands, and yet they were soon overshadowed in popular memory due to the exceptional visual appeal of Rosenthal’s photograph showing the raising of a replacement flag a few hours later.

If the first flag raising languished in relative obscurity during the past 75 years, the second raising has suffered from dispersed and, on occasion, incomplete recordkeeping as well as from contradictory first-person accounts. While Rosenthal’s photograph appeared in U.S. newspapers just two days after the flag-raising event, the film captured by combat photographers often took a much slower, more circuitous path to the United States. The motion picture footage taken by Sergeant William Genaust, writes Criss Austin, offers a telling case study in this regard. Recent efforts at the National Archives to identify the earliest version of the film in its collection have failed to produce the original footage captured on Iwo Jima. Detailing the provenance research and preservation work of the motion picture archivists in College Park, Austin confirms that the earliest copy of Genaust’s film at National Archives dates to the early 1950s.

Christopher B. Havern’s essay in this volume draws attention to one of many myths that have confounded historians over the years. Among the competing narratives that have grown up around the second flag raising is the claim of Coast Guard

Quartermaster Robert L. Resnick, who served at Iwo Jima on board the Coast Guard-manned landing ship, tank *LST-758* and who identified himself as the individual who had provided the replacement flag later photographed by Rosenthal. As Havern explains, the log records from the U.S. Navy’s *LST-779* disprove this popular misconception by confirming that Navy Reserve Ensign Alan S. Wood, the ship’s communications officer, supplied the larger flag instead.

The challenges and revelations of the Marine Corps’ investigations are recounted in essays by Colonel Mary Reinwald (Ret) and Colonel Keil Gentry (Ret), respectively. Technological advances since 1947 have allowed for additional evidence to come to light. Reinwald and Gentry offer transparency and insight into the 2016 and 2019 Marine Corps investigations. As a member of the Huly Panel, Reinwald describes the evidence, evaluation process, and conclusions that recovered the participation of Private First Class Harold Schultz in the second flag raising. Likewise, in his account of the 2019 Bowers Board, Gentry shows how an expanded archival record combined with technological advances spurred new observations that ultimately proved the presence of Corporal Harold Keller in Rosenthal’s famous photograph.

## LEGACY

The concluding chapter, “Every Marine a Flag Raiser: The Legacy and Meaning of the Iwo Jima Flag Raisings,” invites readers to reconsider the meaning of the Iwo Jima flag raising and acknowledge its continuing impact on military identity and modern visual culture. As Paul Westermeyer and I argue, the importance of the flag raising lies not in the individual identities of its participants, but rather in its ability to inspire Marines and civilians alike to emulate its model citizenship.

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As we mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima with this publication, the Marine Corps

History Division holds the goal of forging new territory for military history scholarship and opening up new ways to evaluate the impact of Rosenthal's photograph on American society and the Marine Corps from World War II to the present day. For the Corps, especially, the conquest of the Japanese island became a hallmark of Marine Corps history, an honor that has little to do with its signature image. As Hal Buell has observed, "Marines have a special affection for the picture for obvious reasons: their blood paid for the picture and it resonates in their soul."<sup>19</sup> The essays in *Investigating Iwo* help us see the weight that this history still bears on the present day. Correcting the official record thus pays tribute not only to the Marines who raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi, but also honors all of the servicemembers who fought on Iwo Jima to help secure ultimate Allied victory in World War II.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Stephen Foley, email correspondence with author, 11 March 2018.
2. Stephen Foley, email correspondence with LtCol Eric Dent, June 2016; and Stephen Foley, email correspondence with Charles P. Neimeyer, July 2016.
3. Amateur historian Dustin Spence posited an updated roster of participants in the first flag raising as early as 2006. See Dustin Spence, "Unraveling the Mysteries of the First Flag Raising," *Leatherneck* 79, no. 10, 11 October 2006.
4. See, for example, Michael S. Schmidt, "Man in Iwo Jima Photo Was Misidentified, Marine Corps Says," *New York Times*, 23 June 2016.
5. Occasionally such repurposing generates backlash among active-duty and retired servicemembers, who regard the Iwo Jima flag raising with reverence. Recent controversies include a recreation of the famous photograph that replaced the American flag with a gay pride flag, designed by Ed Freeman for *Frontier Magazine* in 2015, and the Under Armor T-shirt design "Band of Ballers," which shows men raising a basketball hoop in a similar fashion to the servicemen raising the American flag on Iwo Jima.
6. This rationale found support after the island's capture, when Iwo Jima became an important base for the U.S. military during its final assault on the Japanese mainland. By war's end, more than 2,000 heavy bombers carrying 24,761 Americans had made emergency landings at Iwo Jima during aerial raids on Japan.
7. Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima* (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1994), 47. Nearly all of the 21,000 Japanese defenders were killed during the battle.
8. Parker Bishop Albee Jr. and Keller Cushing Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi: Raising the Flags on Iwo Jima* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 95–96.
9. For Marines on the ground, the first flag raising was the more significant of the two events that day. The second flag raising was a nonevent, except that a photographer snapped an opportune image. Consequently, historians have had to contend with conflicting eyewitness statements from the beginning, even from the flag raisers.
10. U.S. Marine Corps Pacific Negative Logbook, Record Group 127, Still Photographs Collection, National Archives, College Park, MD.
11. *New York Times*, 25 February 1945, 28.
12. Robert Sherrod to David Hulburd, 13 March 1945, unnumbered cable, Folder Cables, Box 29, Robert Lee Sherrod Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries, NY.
13. James Bradley with Ron Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam, 2000), 318.
14. Joe Rosenthal and W. C. Heinz, "The Picture that Will Live Forever," *Collier's*, 18 February 1955.
15. Adm Chester W. Nimitz, CINCPAC Communiqué No. 300, dated 16 March 1945, in *Navy Department Communiques*, vol. II (Washington, DC: Office of Public Information, U.S. Navy, 1945).
16. This policy must have caused consternation to many, including Ray Jacobs, a Marine radioman who was picked up to accompany patrol leader Lt Schrier during the first flag raising. Because Jacobs was assigned to Company F and Schrier's platoon consisted largely of Company E Marines, historians previously thought that it was unlikely that he was a member of the platoon.
17. Matthew Hansen, "New Mystery Arises from Iconic Iwo Jima Image," *Omaha (NE) World-Herald*, 23 November 2014.
18. Spence, "Unraveling the Mysteries of the First Flag Raising."
19. Hal Buell as quoted in Donald R. Winslow, "Time Magazine Alters Historic Rosenthal Icon for 'Green' Cover," National Press Photographers Association, 18 April 2008.

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# INVESTIGATING IWO

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# PART ONE

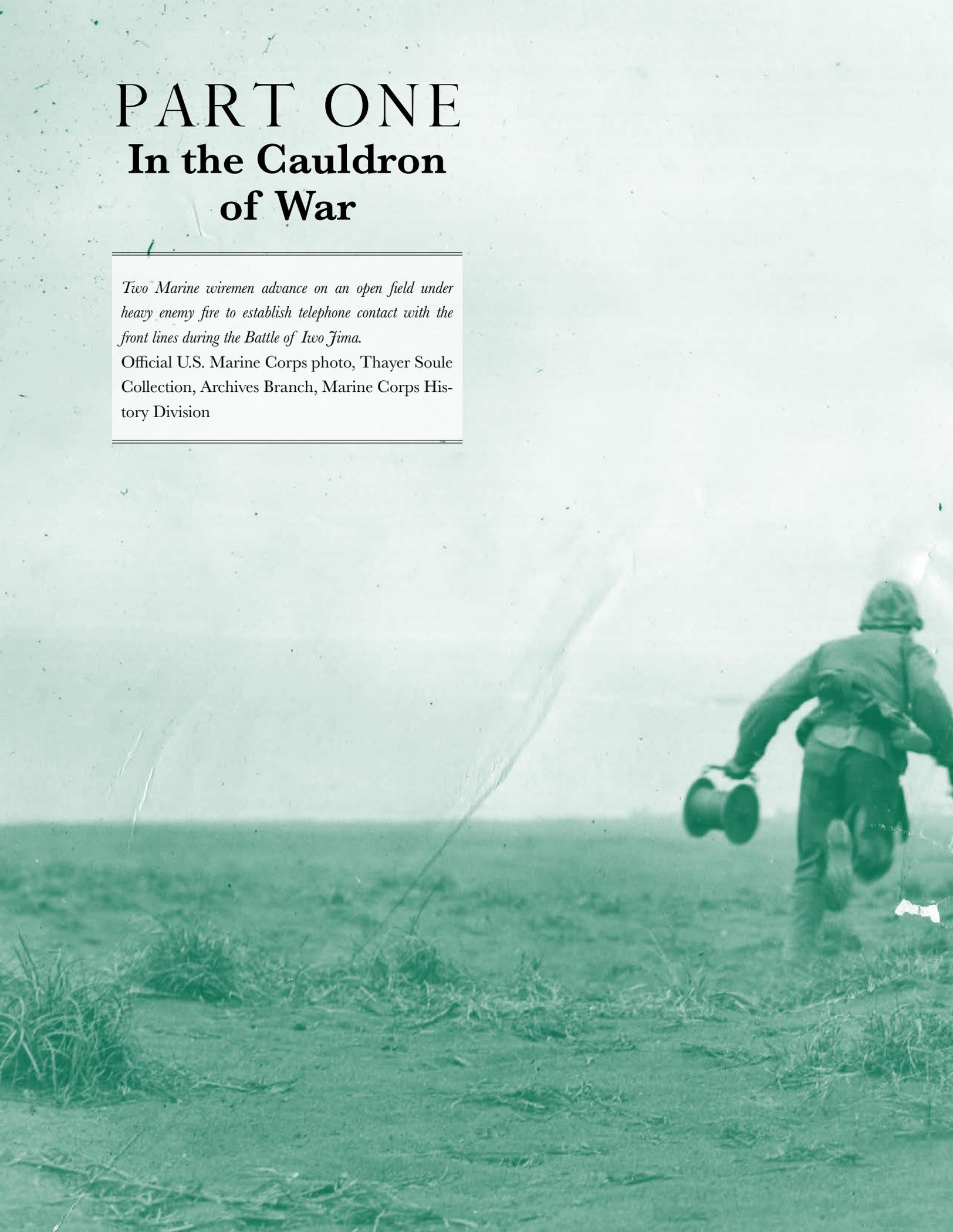
## In the Cauldron of War

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*Two Marine wiremen advance on an open field under heavy enemy fire to establish telephone contact with the front lines during the Battle of Iwo Jima.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, Thayer Soule Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

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## CHAPTER

# I

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## BLACK SAND AND BLOOD

### *The 36-day Battle for Iwo Jima, 19 February–26 March 1945*

*by Charles P. Neimeyer, PhD*

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The intensity of the World War II struggle for Iwo Jima in 19 February–26 March 1945 is fully seared into the historical memory of the United States Marine Corps—the Service that suffered most in taking this speck of volcanic ash in the western Pacific.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, nothing epitomizes the idealized Corps-wide attributes of determination, valor, and teamwork more than AP photographer Joe Rosenthal’s iconic black and white photograph of a flag raising on top of Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima’s predominant and most recognizable terrain feature. The fact that this flag was raised early in the struggle, with weeks of intense and violent combat to come for the Marines involved, is often missed by those who have not closely studied the battle.

Iwo Jima is considered a seminal event in the history of the Marine Corps for both the Rosenthal photograph and for what took place before and especially *after* the flag was raised on 23 February 1945, just four days after the landing. The fighting reputation of the Marine Corps was already well established prior

to landing on Iwo Jima. However, for the Marines, the titanic 36-day struggle for the island was shocking in its ferocity, lethality, and duration. For example, taking the island ultimately required approximately one-half of all Marine Corps ground combat power then available in the Western Pacific (most of the veteran 3d Marine Division and all the 4th and 5th Divisions) to wrest this single eight-mile-long island from its Japanese defenders. Furthermore, Iwo Jima represents the only battle during the Pacific war where total Marine and Navy casualties (approximately 24,000 killed and wounded) exceeded that of the enemy. It was supposed to be over in two weeks of hard fighting, yet it lasted for more than a month. After the island was declared secured, U.S. Army occupation forces were still flushing out diehards from caves and tunnels located all over the island. In sum, this operation was a tremendously violent and casualty-intense affair from start to finish. For the Marines and sailors on the island, Iwo Jima was a battle they would never forget.

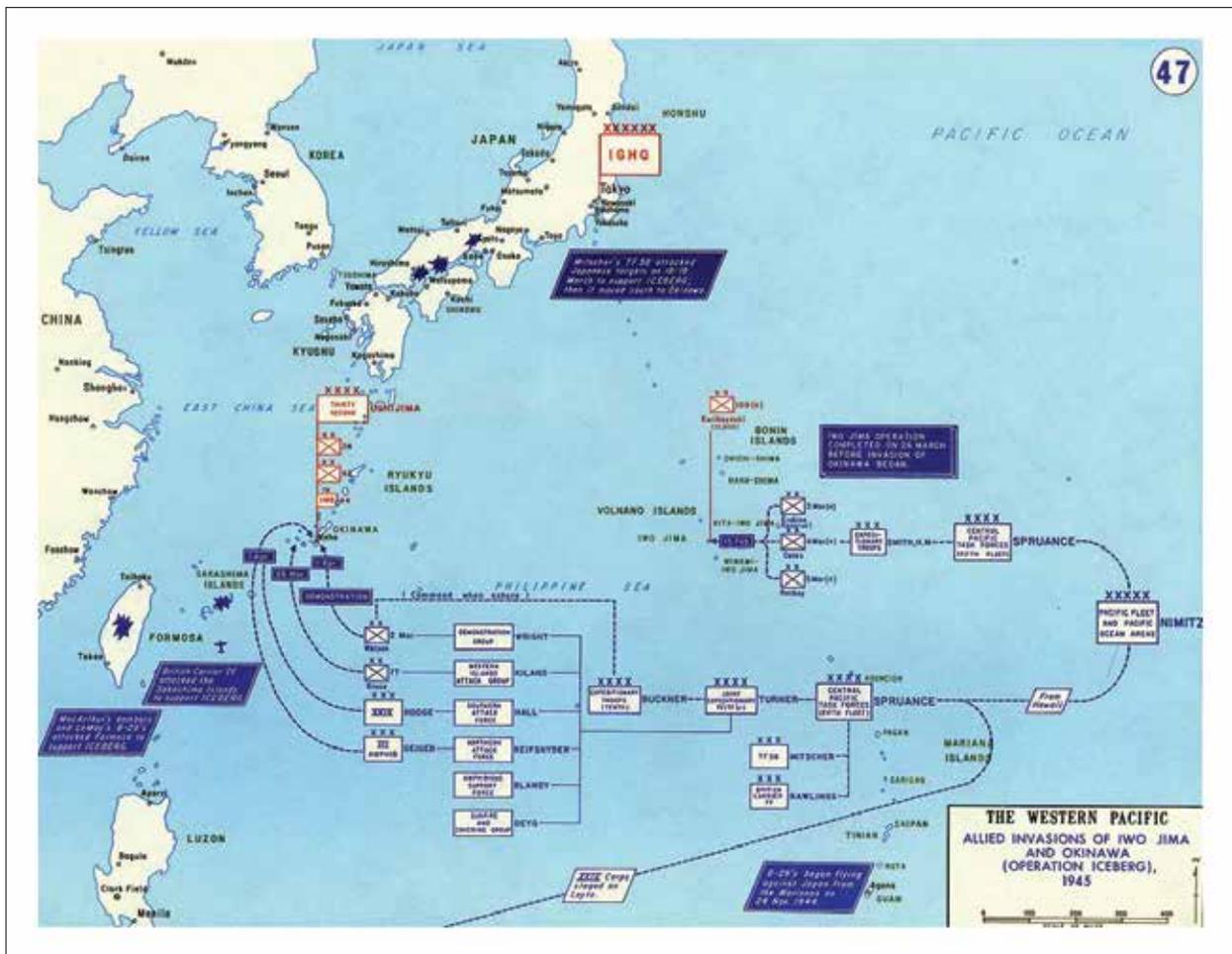
## TASK FORCE 58

While actual ground combat operations to take Iwo Jima did not begin until 19 February 1945, the fight for the island started well in advance of that date. On 15 June 1944, U.S. naval aircraft assigned to Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Task Force 58 attacked the island of Iwo Jima, or Iwo To as it was known to the Japanese. Task Force 58 was the U.S. Navy's primary offensive weapon against the empire of Japan for the later stages of the Pacific war, 1944–45. The task force also represented one of the most significant and unique collections of fleet aircraft carriers, surface combatants, and support ships ever combined by the U.S. Navy. While its actual size varied during its two years of existence, by early 1945, Task Force 58 possessed at least 12 aircraft carriers of various sizes, numerous fast battleships, heavy cruisers, destroyers, and hundreds of support boats. It was designed to be the striking arm of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's massive U.S. Fifth Fleet and is credited by many as being a virtual harbinger of defeat for Japanese forces in the Pacific. One of Admiral Spruance's subordinates, Rear Admiral J. J. Clark, certainly thought so. During the initial airstrikes against Iwo Jima and neighboring Chichi Jima, Clark believed that Vice Admiral Mitscher's fast carriers, were "a virtually invincible force" against the Japanese throughout the Western Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

The June 1944 naval air attacks on Iwo Jima were necessary to cover then-ongoing operations southward in the Mariana Islands and to get an understanding as to the potential level of defense that the Japanese had prepared thus far on the island. After the Marianas fell to the United States in August 1944, Iwo Jima became the logical *next* target for U.S. amphibious warfare planners (map 1). As naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison noted, Iwo Jima

was geographically situated "almost midway between Honshu [the main Japanese home island] and the Marianas, 625 miles north of Saipan and 660 miles south of Tokyo."<sup>3</sup> Once American Marianas-based bombing operations against the home islands began in late 1944, taking out the Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima, who would assuredly attempt to interdict the bombers on their way to and from their targets, became even more imperative. These bombing missions required American aviators to endure a largely undefended 3,000-mile round trip at high altitude for nearly 16 straight hours of flying. Furthermore, Japanese radar based on Iwo warned the home islands of impending bombing raids, which made the trip even more of a nightmare for the American attackers.

The U.S. Navy and Army Air Forces' aircraft that pounded Iwo Jima during the months leading up to the February 1945 amphibious assault also took aerial photographs of the entire island (figure 1.1). Special consideration was given to the island's one major topographical feature: Mount Suribachi. Later nicknamed "Hot Rocks" by U.S. planners, Suribachi was a dormant volcano located on the southern end of the pork-chop-shaped island that still vented sulfurous fumes visible from the air. Mount Suribachi dominated the only two viable landing sites for any amphibious assault that might be made on the island. Other than the two obvious airfields (and one under construction) and their associated installations located toward the center of the island, what concerned the Americans most was that there were few significant targets initially discernible to their photographic intelligence analysts. Nevertheless, as war correspondent Robert L. Sherrod stated concerning Iwo Jima as a potential target, "We were certain of two things: 1.) we had to have it; 2.) it would be costly."<sup>4</sup>



MAP 1  
 Map of the Western Pacific showing the Allied invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945.  
 Official Department of Defense map, U.S. Military Academy, West Point



FIGURE 1.1  
 This view, taken from Iwo Jima's northeastern side, was photographed during the afternoon of 15 June 1944 from a plane deployed from the USS Langley (CVL 27) during raids on Iwo Jima, Chichi Jima, and Haha Jima. A Grumman TBM Avenger bomber flies in the upper right.  
 Official U.S. Navy photo, NH 104137, courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command

## KURIBAYASHI ARRIVES

Soon after the airstrikes on the island began, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi arrived to take command of all Japanese forces on Iwo Jima. Kuribayashi was a well-regarded Japanese army officer who once commanded the emperor's Imperial Guard. Like his more famous naval counterpart, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, he also served a tour as a military attaché in the United States during the 1920s. He too held a healthy respect for the latent military capacity of the United States. Nevertheless, Kuribayashi arrived on Iwo Jima determined to defend what he considered sacred Japanese home soil to the bitter end. He fully did not

expect to survive any coming battle with the Americans.

Unknown to American war planners at the time, General Kuribayashi decided to defend Iwo Jima in a fundamentally different way than previous Japanese efforts. Unlike the situation faced by the U.S. Marine Corps at Guadalcanal or even the June 1944 battle of Saipan where the leathernecks faced suicidal *banzai* attacks by Japanese infantry in the open, at Iwo Jima, this particular tactic was strictly forbidden by Kuribayashi. Instead, he ordered his troops to dig in. Moreover, he did not intend to defend the island at the water's edge as his counterparts had unsuccessfully tried to do at Tarawa in late 1943. By January 1945, Kuribayashi had more than 20,000 combat troops hidden in a vast series of mutually reinforcing strongpoints, concrete bunkers, caves, and tunnels that made it exceptionally difficult for superior American firepower to have much effect on them (figure 1.2). The Japanese defenders were not only *on* the eight-mile-long island, they were *in* it as well.

Kuribayashi was under no illusion that he could hold Mount Suribachi from any kind of determined American assault. Accordingly, he made the dormant volcano a semi-independent command and did not assign more than approximately 1,500 of his 22,000 troops to its defense. The general's standing orders were clear: "Once the enemy began the invasion of the island, everybody would resist the enemy until the end, making his position his own tomb. Everybody was to kill ten of the enemy."<sup>5</sup>

## PRE-D-DAY WOES

As 1945 began, American war planners realized that the schedule for Operation Detachment was running into problems (figure 1.3). First and foremost among them was the situa-



FIGURE 1.2

*Looking out from a Japanese cave at the foot of Mount Suribachi, where enemy defenders directed fire from an 8-inch gun toward the landing beaches.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC George Burns, George Burns Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

tion with General Douglas MacArthur's reconquest of the Philippines. It was taking longer than expected. Consequently, naval assets that had been slated for the Iwo Jima assault were not immediately available. As a result, the original assault date of 20 January 1945 had to be moved to 3 February and ultimately to 19 February as the final possible time to make the landing. To make matters even more difficult, the complete conquest of Iwo Jima had to be accomplished before 1 April 1945, when key naval assets were slated to be redirected from the Iwo operation to the larger invasion of Okinawa, Japan.

Thus, when the commanding general of the Marine Expeditionary Forces, Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, argued that his Iwo assault force would need at least 10 days of pre-invasion naval gunfire, the U.S. Navy leadership disagreed. The Navy told Smith that he



FIGURE 1.3

*Navy and Marine Corps operation leaders examine a relief model of Iwo Jima while planning the invasion of that island.  
From left to right: RAdm William H. P. Blandy, RAdm Harry W. Hill, LtGen Holland M. Smith, and VAdm Richmond K. Turner.  
Official U.S. Navy photo, NH 104266, courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command*

was only going to get three days of pre-invasion bombardment and that they could not afford the expenditure of precious ammunition with the Okinawa landing coming on so soon after the Iwo operation concluded. A fierce debate quickly broke out between Smith and Admiral Spruance. The Navy commander had planned for Task Force 58 to hit Tokyo at the same time the Marine assault waves were coming ashore on Iwo Jima. The airstrike was designed to take pressure off the naval forces supporting the Iwo landing. Adding to the Marines' pre-invasion

woes, Spruance tasked two of his most modern battleships, the USS *North Carolina* (BB 55) and the USS *Washington* (BB 56) at the last minute to accompany his carriers on the planned Tokyo raid. Although the Tokyo raid was supposed to be secondary to the invasion of Iwo Jima, this effort now had twice the battleship support that the Iwo invasion force had on D-day. Smith was livid at Spruance's decision to take the best battleships and to limit his requested bombardment to only three days. He bitterly noted in his memoirs that "we had to haggle

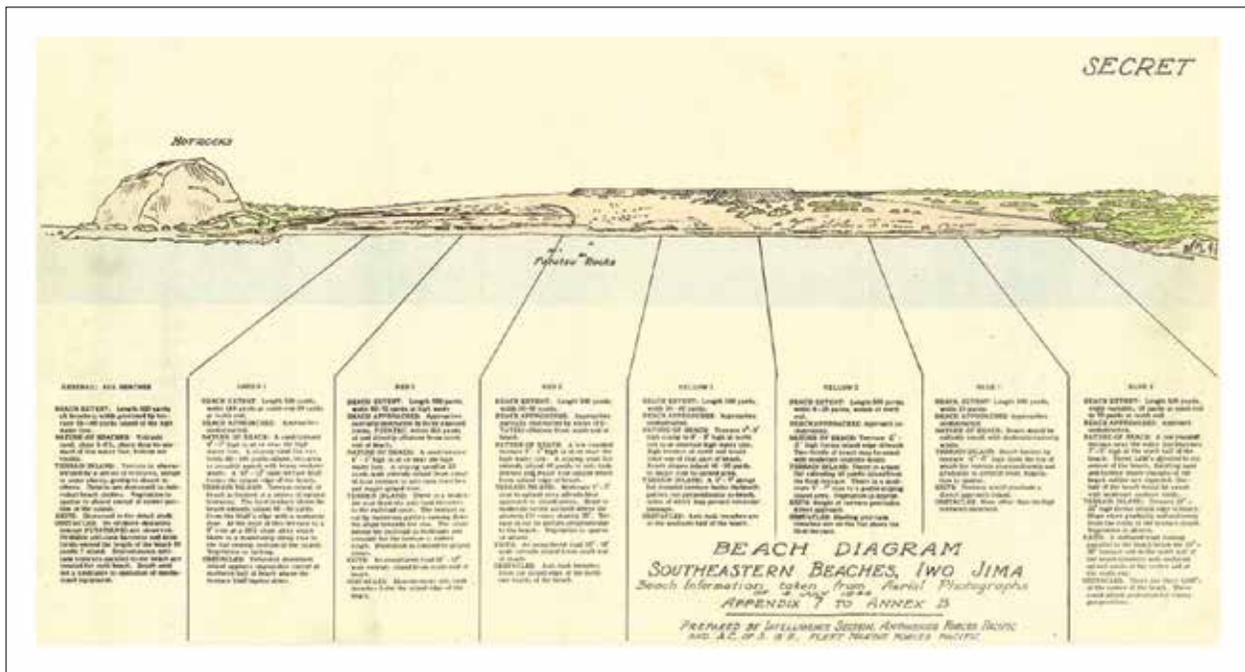


FIGURE 1.4

*This beach diagram of the southeast coast of Iwo Jima, Japan, was prepared by the Intelligence Section, Amphibious Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, using information taken from aerial photographs on 4 July 1944. It shows the color codes and obstacles anticipated at the amphibious landing sites; Mount Suribachi, labeled “Hotrocks,” is visible at far left.*

Official Department of Defense illustration

like horse traders, balancing irreplaceable lives against replaceable ammunition. I was never so depressed in my whole life.”<sup>6</sup>

After months of planning and mostly ineffective pre-invasion day bombardment by the U.S. Navy and Army Air Forces, the Joint Expeditionary Task Force commanded by Navy Vice Admiral Richmond K. Turner arrived off the shores of Iwo Jima on D-3 as scheduled. The plan for the initial Marine Corps invasion force was to land two divisions abreast on the southeastern beaches of the island and then wheel north toward Kitano Point. The 5th Marine Division, commanded by Major General Keller E. Rockey, was given the D-day task of cutting off and isolating Mount Suribachi from the rest of the island to the north. The 4th Marine Division, commanded by Major General Clifton B. Cates, after clearing a difficult beach objective known as “the Quarry,” was to attack

to the right of the 5th Division. The 3d Marine Division, commanded by Major General Graves B. Erskine, was held as a floating reserve by Lieutenant General Smith. The overall commander of the V Amphibious Corps was Major General Harry Schmidt.

## D-DAY ARRIVES

On 19 February 1945, as D-day dawned, the U.S. Navy increased its naval and air bombardment of the island. Marines of the 4th and 5th Divisions loaded into their assault craft in preparation for landing ashore. The selected beaches had been divided and subsequently subdivided into color coded sections (from left to right): green, red, yellow, and blue beaches (figures 1.4 and 1.5). The 28th Marine Regiment of the 5th Division was assigned the immediate D-day objective of cutting off the narrow neck of land that connected Suribachi with the rest of the



FIGURE 1.5

*Landing craft carrying Marines from the 5th Division align for the “line of departure” in preparation for the D-day assaults on Iwo Jima, 19 February 1945.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC George Burns, George Burns Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

island. They went ashore on the far left of the line at Green Beach. The 4th Division, coming in on the right of 5th Division, was supposed to push onto the Motoyama Plateau after neutralizing the beach defenses at the Quarry. Once both divisions had consolidated on the plateau,

the 3d Division (minus the 3d Marine Regiment) was to land (at some point) and continue the momentum of the attack. However, D-day and the immediate days that followed turned out to be much harder than American planners had assumed.

Since July 1944, General Kuribayashi had doggedly improved his underground defenses across the island. Miles of tunnels, some hewn through solid rock, had been created so that the Japanese defenders could support each other without being exposed to American counterfire. One of his largest problems had to do with water. There was no natural source of fresh water on Iwo Jima, so Kuribayashi created an elaborate cistern system to collect rain water. Ubiquitous rain barrels and water pipes were later found on top of Mount Suribachi. The larger cisterns were located underground or, if above ground, had been reinforced with concrete and camouflaged against detection by aerial reconnaissance. The official Marine Corps History Division report on Kuribayashi's available firepower during the battle noted the following:

*The backbone of [Kuribayashi's] infantry defense was the 2nd Independent Mixed Brigade (five infantry battalions plus one artillery battalion) reinforced and the 145th Infantry Regiment (three infantry battalions and one artillery battalion) reinforced. Generally speaking, his available artillery, which consisted of two artillery battalions and three mortar battalions, was organized into what was known as an artillery group. Also reinforcing the brigade and the regiment were five independent anti-tank battalions, two independent machine gun battalions, and two rocket companies.<sup>7</sup>*

In sum, Kuribayashi had a formidable array of weaponry he could throw at any attacker. Moreover, for the very first time in the Central Pacific, the Japanese utilized substantial amounts of antipersonnel landmines. Since Kuribayashi had accurately predicted the two landing locations for any American amphibious assault, he ordered these areas to be

heavily mined. Moreover, due to the nature of the metallic soil on Iwo, the Japanese ceramic landmines were nearly undetectable by American minesweeping devices. The Japanese also rigged up 500-pound aerial bombs and buried them in rows on the approaches that led inland from the beach. These devices were actuated by a pressure plate and were designed to cause incredible devastation, as the Marines would soon discover. The only way for any attacker to get through such a defensive network of explosive ordnance was to slowly and carefully probe for them by hand using bayonets and knives.<sup>8</sup>

On D-day, at approximately 0900, the assault elements of the Regimental Combat Teams of the 4th and 5th Divisions landed abreast on the beach (figure 1.6). They immediately found the terrace of black volcanic sand exceptionally hard to negotiate—even for the infantry. Except for some occasional heavy mortar shells and sporadic infantry fire, the assault waves made some initial progress. Other follow-on forces, however, soon stacked up behind them. As the day wore on, the surf conditions rapidly deteriorated, making the landing of crucial artillery, tanks, and other vehicles even more difficult. This was exactly what Kuribayashi had hoped would happen. Just after 1000 that morning, the Japanese opened up with every indirect fire weapons system that could range the landing sites. There was literally nowhere to go and no cover since the loose volcanic sand made digging individual foxholes nearly impossible to accomplish. One Marine described the conditions as being similar to “trying to dig a hole in a barrel of wheat.”<sup>9</sup> Captain Fred E. Haynes of the 28th Regiment noticed a trend regarding Marine casualties on and near the beach terraces—the killed were usually found in groups. Haynes surmised that Japanese spotters on Suribachi would wait for a group of Marines to gather



FIGURE 1.6

*As the pall of smoke from the battlefield shrouds Mount Suribachi in the background, an afternoon assault wave of Marines from 2d Battalion, 27th Regiment, worms its way over the crest of the beach terrace on 19 February 1945.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Pvt Robert Campbell, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

“before firing high-explosive rounds into their midst. This [was] why so many Marines who survived the first few days of the battle reported seeing groups of four or five Marines huddled together in death inside a shell crater. A single round in such an enclosed space could take out everybody.”<sup>10</sup>

By nightfall of the first day of fighting, Marine Corps casualties had been heavy, but they had been able to land about 30,000 combat troops. While many of the veterans in both divisions expected to be attacked that night by one of the traditional Japanese banzai assaults, it did not happen.<sup>11</sup> The 4th Division especially suffered that first day from fire coming from the Quarry and the east boat basin. Due to the intensity of the fighting, the Marines had largely failed to reach their day one objectives, but they had seized the tip of Motoyama Airfield No. 1, isolated Mount Suribachi, and were preparing to reduce the Japanese defenses at the base of the mountain the next morning.

One of those men who had survived that first day was African American Marine, Corporal Goodwin G. Doughty. Doughty had been assigned to the 36th Depot Company and had landed on the afternoon of D-day just behind the assault waves. His job was to get ammunition and supplies up to the line companies as soon as possible. The first thing that Doughty noted was the bodies and debris everywhere. He also saw the difficulty of getting off the beach in all that volcanic ash. Doughty observed a Navy beachmaster pleading with Marines feverishly digging in to get off the beach and out of the way of landing craft trying to offload crucial supplies and ammunition. He saw bodies of dead Marines in the sand and even some still rolling in the surf. He wrote that “the whole area was just chaotic.”<sup>12</sup> Doughty was happy to see that the lighter assault troops had been able to push inland to give the follow-on forces some breathing room on the beach.

Robert Sherrod was one of the first journalists on the beach. The correspondent for *Time* and *Life* had been with the assault waves during the exceptionally bloody battle for Tarawa in 1943 and was no stranger to combat. However, what he saw on the beach shocked even him:

*The sloping sands were spotted with American dead. Here and there were dead Japs [Japanese], but it was apparent that the enemy had not defended his island from the beach. He depended mostly on his mortars, artillery, and hillside machine guns. Whether the dead were Japs or Americans, they have one thing in common; they died with the greatest possible violence. Nowhere in the Pacific war had I seen such badly mangled bodies. Many were cut squarely in half. Legs and arms lay fifty feet from any body. In one spot on the sand, far from the nearest cluster of dead, I saw a*



FIGURE 1.7

*Marines clear out Japanese machine gun and sniper positions at the foot of Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, on 22 February 1945.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC George Burns, George Burns Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

*string of guts 15 feet long. Only the legs were easy to identify; they were Jap if wrapped in khaki puttees, American if covered by canvas leggings. The smell of burning flesh was heavy in some areas.*<sup>13</sup>

While it was clear that the Marines had suffered heavily in killed and wounded those

first two days on the beach, both the 4th and 5th Divisions continued their assault. The 28th Marine Regiment commanded by Colonel Harry B. Liversedge, a former Marine Raider, concentrated their fire on a series of caves and bunkers found at the base of Suribachi (figure 1.7). This area seemed to be where the Japanese had focused their mountain defensive

efforts. Marine 37mm antitank guns and even U.S. Navy destroyers offshore fired directly into any bunker and cave entrance that could be located, while the infantry maneuvered to get close enough to hit them with flamethrowers and explosives. It was slow going.

On both the 4th and 5th Division fronts, casualties continued to mount. For the Marines, the combat on Iwo devolved into a series of relentless frontal assaults against dug-in Japanese defenses. Marines usually only discovered Japanese positions when they drew fire from them. Even then, they were difficult to spot. Private First Class Jacklyn H. Lucas located what he thought was a Japanese fighting position near the edge of Motoyama Airfield No. 1. He could not initially see the Japanese soldiers, but he and several of his squad mates fired their weapons in the general direction of where they might be hidden. According to Lucas, they were so close that he believed the Japanese soldiers were fighting from a covered trench no more than four feet from his direct front. The Japanese soldiers finally made a mistake, and two of them stood up in Lucas's line of fire. Lucas believed he killed at least one of the enemy soldiers before his M1 Garand rifle jammed. Because he was looking down trying to unjam his weapon, he was the only member of his squad who noticed another Japanese soldier roll two hand grenades into their position and next to Private First Class Allan C. Crowson, the squad's automatic rifleman. Knocking Crowson out of the way and simultaneously yelling "grenade," Lucas used the butt of his rifle to jam one of the explosives into the volcanic ash while pulling the second underneath his body. At least one of the grenades exploded directly underneath Lucas. His body was lifted into the air by the force of the grenade blast. Thanks to this selfless act of heroism, Lucas

saved his fellow Marines from further bodily harm. Incredibly, although gravely wounded, Lucas survived his injuries and was later awarded the Medal of Honor.<sup>14</sup>

## TAKING SURIBACHI AND MOTOYAMA AIRFIELD NO. 1

By D+4, having finally eliminated the Japanese defenders at the base of the mountain, Colonel Liversedge ordered Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson, the commanding officer of 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, to send a reinforced patrol to the summit of the mountain. Johnson assigned the mission to former Raider First Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier to take a patrol of about 48 Marines, including at least two U.S. Navy corpsmen, to climb the slope and, if possible, raise a flag on its summit. Most of the patrol came from Captain Dave E. Severance's Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines. The patrol did not know what to expect and many of the Marines who ascended Suribachi that morning did not expect to come back down alive. Nevertheless, Schrier gained the crest without any fighting and located a piece of Japanese water pipe and raised a small 3 feet x 5 feet American flag at approximately 1020 (figure 1.8).<sup>15</sup> The flag was noticed by nearly everyone on the beach and even nearby U.S. Navy vessels. Ship's horns sounded and Marines all along the line cheered, with some even throwing their helmets into the air in celebration. It was a tremendously emotional moment for everyone. Apparently, the noise and the flag attracted the notice of a few Japanese defenders hidden in a cave near the summit, but these soldiers were quickly eliminated by other members of Schrier's patrol. About two hours later, and likely out of fear that the first flag might end up as someone's battlefield souvenir, a second larger flag was raised to replace the

first one.<sup>16</sup> An action photo of this second flag raising was fortuitously taken by AP photographer Joe Rosenthal. Contrary to some contemporary stories, neither flag raising was staged. Both raisings were spontaneous events, and the second flag only became more famous due to the strong visual impact of the Rosenthal photograph. While some might assume that the raising of the flags on Suribachi that day meant the enemy was nearly defeated, nothing could have been further from the truth. For the Marines, while it was good to know that the menacing presence of Suribachi was no longer an issue, there were still weeks of heavy fighting ahead for everyone.

Amazingly, Rosenthal's iconic photograph nearly did not get taken. He missed the first flag raising, which took place on Mount Suribachi earlier on the morning of D+4. The honor of taking photographs of the first flag raising went to *Leatherneck* photographer Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery. Spotting Rosenthal going up to the summit as he was headed down the mountain, Lowery stated that the AP photographer asked him "if there was any use in his going up there." The staff sergeant replied that he "thought there were good shots to be had because you could see almost the whole beach, with a panorama of the ships and equipment below." This recommendation was enough to keep Rosenthal moving to the summit of Suribachi. Once on top, he noticed the first flag flapping in the breeze and a group of Marines getting a second one ready to be raised as a replacement for the first flag. Perhaps, he might get an image of them as they raised this second flag? Maneuvering for position with combat cameraman Sergeant William Genaust, Rosenthal almost missed his chance as he and the other photographer went out of their way not to interfere with each other's shots. Rosen-



FIGURE 1.8

*A Marine shoots at Japanese in caves on the side of Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, on 23 February 1945. The American flag, raised on the summit at approximately 1020, can be seen in the distance.*  
Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC George Burns, George Burns Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

thal noted that "by being polite to each other we almost damned near missed [taking a photograph at all]." Suddenly, and almost without warning, Rosenthal noticed the second flag going up and shouted to the sergeant, "There it goes, Bill!" As Genaust filmed the event on his Bell & Howell camera, Rosenthal did not have his camera viewfinder fully ready. Fortunately, he snapped the shutter at the exact moment the flag was unfurling in the breeze and at a perfect 45-degree angle to the ground. Thus, by sheer luck and good timing, Rosenthal took what is likely the most famous combat photograph in American history.<sup>17</sup>

While the 5th Division focused on Suribachi, the 4th Division faced its own kind of hell in and around the vertical cliffs farther north known as the "Rock Quarry" (figure 1.9). General Cates' 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, 4th Marine Division, commanded by Lieutenant



FIGURE 1.9

*In a ravine on the northern ridges of Iwo Jima, Marines use high explosives to blast the Japanese defenses. The enemy remnants were determined to resist to the end from well-defended positions in the honeycombed caves of these ridges.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, Thayer Soule Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Colonel Justice M. Chambers, suffered 40 percent casualties in the fighting there. Chambers later received the Medal of Honor for his combat performance on Iwo Jima. Eventually, after three days of exceptionally heavy fighting, the regiments of the 4th Division stood atop the Motoyama Plateau and now faced the heart of the Japanese defenses strung across the center of the island near the second airfield. By D+4 (the same day as the Mount Suribachi flag raisings), the 23d Marines had suffered 1,160 casualties. In total, the 4th Division's casualties were even higher (but only slightly so) than that of the 5th Division during their struggle to take Suribachi, with more than 2,778 Marines killed or wounded in the first four days of fighting.<sup>18</sup>

## “HELL WITH THE FIRE OUT”<sup>19</sup>

By the time of the flag raisings on Mount Suribachi, the casualty levels had been so intense for both of Major General Schmidt's assault divisions that he was already required to begin landing the strategic reserve of the 3d Marine Division (minus the 3d Marine Regiment). The two regiments of the 3d Division—the 21st and 9th Marine Regiments—eventually occupied the center of the American line with the 5th Division on their left and the 4th Division on their right. Weeks earlier, the Marines of the 3d Division were concerned that they might not be needed for this battle. By D+4, they no longer worried about being left out of the fight.

Not all Marines were initially assigned to an operating unit. One such Marine was Private First Class Ralph Lee Edwards from Stafford County, Virginia. Originally assigned to the 30th Replacement Draft, Marines in Edwards' situation waited to be assigned to a unit at the front. In the meantime, most served on the beach unloading a never-ending stream of inbound U.S. Navy resupply vessels. The heavy casualties in the line regiments almost guaranteed that Marines from the 30th Replacement Draft would be in action soon. Thus, on D+4, Edwards found himself assigned to assist a machine gun team with Company I of the 3d Battalion, 24th Marines. He had been given no particular training for his new job, but he quickly learned what was expected. An “examination of the muster roll of the 24th Marines makes it patently clear that the assignment of men and officers from the replacement drafts was done alphabetically” and not based on preexisting skills or occupational specialties.<sup>20</sup> Edwards recalled seeing the raising of a flag on Mount Suribachi that day. However, this was the same day that Company I lost more

than 20 percent of the Marines in the company. Most of these Marines gave little thought to the flag on Suribachi and instead tried to focus on staying alive. Edwards' job was to keep his gun fed with an ample supply of ammunition. This meant he had to traverse to and from the beach retrieving it. According to Edwards, getting back down to the beach was not the hard part. Rather, it was finding his gun crew on the return trip that gave him the most consternation. Most of the time, Edwards' gun crew had moved after he made the trip to the beach. This meant he had to search for them while carrying heavy machine gun ammunition belts in his hands and slung over his shoulder. He did this while hoping he did not have the misfortune of running into a Japanese sniper before he found his gun crew. As an ammo carrier, this meant that, for men like Edwards, "you was [*sic*] on the travel."<sup>21</sup>

## NISHI RIDGE AND HILL 362A

By 27 February, all three divisions had run into General Kuribayashi's main line of resistance near Motoyama Airfield No. 2. The 5th Division drew the assignment of taking Nishi Ridge and the heavily defended Hill 362A (figure 1.10). Captain Fred Haynes, a commander in the 28th Regiment, was astounded by the "compartmentalization" of the terrain. He believed that the Japanese could see the entire western half of the island from the top of Hill 362A. This was the likely reason earlier attacks by the 5th Division's 26th and 27th Regimental Combat Teams had run into such stiff resistance. As a defensive system, Haynes noted that "the hill itself contained four separate tunnel systems. One of these stretched a thousand yards long and had seven entrances." Nishi Ridge "also had an elaborate defensive network." Due to

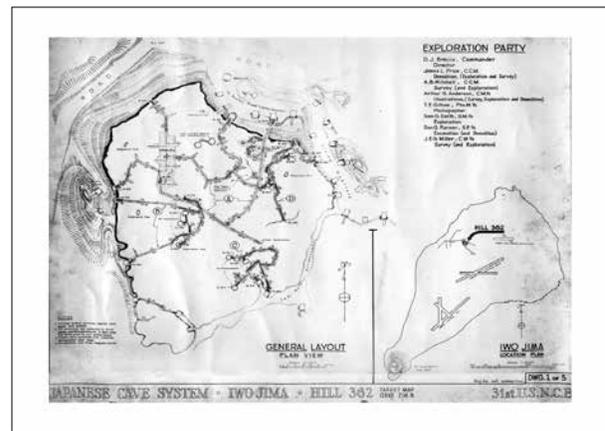


FIGURE 1.10

*Diagram of the Japanese cave system at Hill 362, produced by the Navy's 31st Naval Construction Battalion, reveals the sophisticated nature of the excavation methods, lighting facilities, and entrance designs developed as part of Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi's defensive strategy.*

Official U.S. Navy illustration

the heavy presence of the enemy, the Marines could not conduct ground reconnaissance, and the only way to locate the Japanese was "to move forward, draw fire, and then destroy the unmasked enemy positions." The fight to take Nishi Ridge and Hill 362A would cost the 28th Marines "an average of 236 casualties per day in three days of fighting."<sup>22</sup>

The 1 March attack on this defensive complex was particularly devastating to the "flag-raiser" group from Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines. That day, Corporal Harlon H. Block was killed along with Sergeants Henry O. Hansen and Michael Strank. Hansen was killed by rifle fire, while Strank literally had his heart ripped out of his chest from a mortar blast.<sup>23</sup> The loss of the highly respected Sergeant Strank was especially felt by everyone in Company E. The following day, 2 March 1945, their battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson, was killed by artillery fire.<sup>24</sup> There were many more casualties to come before this battle was over.

The 3d Division in the center of the line

made slightly better headway. Due to the intensity of the fighting around Nishi Ridge, General Schmidt had to remind the 5th Marine Division to remain tied in with the 3d Division on its right. This proved easier said than done. Thanks to the arrival of timely tank support, the gap in the line did not become too egregious. After taking Hill 362A and Nishi Ridge, the 5th Division's regimental combat teams had finally breached Kuribayashi's main line of resistance on their front. In the fight across the center of the island, Japanese tactics remained simple and highly consistent; during assaults by Marine combat forces, the Japanese "kept underground in their caves during our preliminary barrages, some so deep down that they probably couldn't hear the roar of our guns. As soon as the shelling ended, their observers pushed out of the cave openings, quickly followed by troops who took up a line of defense."<sup>25</sup>

### TURKEY KNOB, THE AMPHITHEATER, AND HILL 382

Meanwhile, the 4th Division continued to struggle up the east coast of the island. After overcoming a formation of Japanese defensive works along the eastern shore of the island, the 4th Division regimental combat teams were forced to cross an expanse of flat open ground they called "the Amphitheater" that was dominated by a hill called "Turkey Knob." Major General Cates sent up some M4 Sherman tanks from the 4th Tank Battalion, but they too were unsuccessful in dislodging the Japanese defenders. Here, the Japanese were determined to make their stand. The fighting was especially heavy around Hill 382, known to the Marines as "the Meat Grinder."

An effective weapon used by the Marines

at this time were tanks fitted with bulldozer blades that could literally carve through the Japanese defenses or the highly valued flame tanks that jetted napalm into cave and bunker entrances (figure 1.11). On Turkey Knob, the Marines discovered a huge Japanese concrete blockhouse that had withstood two days of direct fire attacks from their heaviest weapons. The attacks on this part of the Japanese lines had cost the 4th Division more than "4,000 officers and men." The casualties, even with the addition of Marines from the replacement drafts, "reduced the strength of all battalions to a dangerous point. Almost every unit of the division had tried its hand at assaulting Hill 382 and the strong points in the Amphitheater and Turkey Knob."<sup>26</sup>

Beginning on 1 March 1945 and continuing for the next several days, the 4th Division made an all-out effort to break through General Kuribayashi's defenses in their immediate front. Calling in heavy barrages of naval gunfire and artillery, the Marines of the 4th Division finally took the Meat Grinder, Turkey Knob, and the Amphitheater. Their casualties had been intense, though made more so by the Japanese using subterranean tunnels to pop up in locations the Marines had previously secured. Nevertheless, the enemy's main line of resistance was broken on their front, although much more fighting remained ahead. About this time, contrary to Kuribayashi's standing orders, a Japanese naval officer named Captain Samaji Inouye "led his sailors in one final banzai charge." Artillery from the 4th Division mainly broke up this attack, and the rest were killed in hand-to-hand combat with the infantry. The Marines later counted at least 800 Japanese bodies in front of their lines.<sup>27</sup>

Major General Schmidt's Marine forces launched their greatest coordinated assault on



FIGURE 1.11

*A Marine M4 Sherman flamethrowing tank, also known as a "Ronson," scorches a Japanese strongpoint. The eight M4A3 Sherman tanks equipped with the Navy Mark 1 flamethrower proved to be the most valuable weapons systems on Iwo Jima.*  
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo 140758, courtesy of Mark Kauffman, Marine Corps History Division

6 March 1945 (D+15): "All Corps and Division artillery and the medium and heavy guns of supporting vessels joined in this initial preparation." The attacks were launched from left to right, starting with elements of the 5th Division first, the 3d Division in the center, and finally the 4th Division on the right of the entire line. While the bombardment was spectacular, it made little impression on the Japanese defenders. Ground gained by all three divisions was measured in mere yards and Schmidt did not achieve the breakthrough he hoped he would. Consequently, the Marines of the 3d Division shifted their tactics and made predawn attacks on objectives such as Hill 362C. This tactical

change resulted in some degree of success as the 3d Division Marines, for once, caught the Japanese defenders off guard. By 7 March 1945, Major General Rockey's 5th Division was finally reporting some diminishment in Japanese resistance on their front. By 9 March 1945, a six-man detachment from the 21st Marine Regiment had reached the northeastern shore of the island. To prove it, they sent back a canteen of sea water and forwarded it to Schmidt's headquarters with the label, "for inspection, not consumption."<sup>28</sup>

As the Marines closed in on the last Japanese airfield—the partially constructed Motoyama Airfield No. 3—the combat troops



FIGURE 1.12

*A Marine fires at a Japanese defender he spotted during an advance on 11 March 1945.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, 127-GW-113653,  
National Archives and Records Administration

noted that this part of the island was a desolate area of barren rocky ridges: “The tall masses of rocks sprawled and tumbled without pattern, where a series of earthquakes had once pushed up millions of tons of volcanic stone and left them lying in craggy heights and bare, sharp-edged spines several hundred yards long.” Captain Robert Henri of the 3d Marine Division likened it to “going through a miniature Grand Canyon,” with Japanese soldiers concealed “in hundreds of caves and pillboxes among the rocks and boulders.” Henri noted that the fighting from D+16 to D+25 in the 3d Division’s zone of action was typical of the fighting in all three divisional sectors and was characterized “by a seemingly endless series of tragic episodes and unexpected deaths.”<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the Marines pressed onward to Kitano Point in the far north end of the island.

## THE FINAL POCKET

By mid-March, the back of the Japanese resistance had been largely broken on Iwo Jima. The Japanese who were still alive, however, were far from done with fighting. On 16 March 1945,

without consulting Major General Schmidt, the senior American ground force commander on the island, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the senior Navy commander in the Pacific, declared that Iwo Jima was now secure. Nimitz’s announcement was clearly premature. The Marines knew there were still Japanese left alive in and around Kuribayashi’s final headquarters at Kitano Point. Meanwhile, mopping-up operations continued all over the island and the U.S. Army’s 147th Infantry Regiment, originally slated to serve as an occupation force, was asked to deploy early to assist in this effort. By this point, the 4th Marine Division, the most decimated of Schmidt’s combat divisions, started to return to their amphibious shipping located just off shore. Most of Major General Cates’s battalions had lost more than 50 percent of their men.

It was left largely to the 3d Battalion, 28th Marines, and the 26th Marine Regiment to reduce the last holdouts in and around Kuribayashi’s final headquarters (figure 1.12). By Saint Patrick’s Day on 17 March 1945, the 26th Marines had “reached the north coast at Kitano Point and had started to attack around the point, turning south to the northeast side of the rocky gorge” in front of the 28th Marines. Nevertheless, “enemy resistance in this area continued to be formidable from cave and spider foxhole positions.”<sup>30</sup>

About this time, Captain Fred Haynes of the 28th Marines undertook an aerial reconnaissance of the Kitano Point area using a Piper L-4 light observation plane called a “grasshopper” on loan from Marine Observation Squadron 5. Haynes and his pilot flew very low to see if there was a better way to reduce the Japanese holdouts in the rocky crevasses the Marines were now calling “Bloody Gorge.” Thus, the captain was able to convince Major

General Rockey that attacking down the gorge would be as hellish as their previous assault on Nishi Ridge. Wishing to avoid further horrific casualties if possible, Haynes recommended attacking the east side of the gorge while being covered from the opposite side by other Marine units. He noted that “the contorted terrain made it impossible for tanks to operate effectively until armored bulldozers had cleared a road for their advance.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the reduction of Japanese troops in Bloody Gorge was going to take some time, and it was still going to be costly as the remaining Japanese, despite being offered terms of surrender over loud speakers set up by divisional intelligence sections, seemed determined to fight on to the bitter end.

In and around the gorge, Japanese snipers attacked from everywhere. Marines were picked off singly and in pairs until the very last day of organized Japanese resistance on the island. Consequently, due to the dire need for riflemen, many artillerymen found themselves on their way to various infantry regiments as replacements. One such replacement was Private First Class Donald W. Traub of the 13th Marine Regiment (artillery). Traub stated that he and 49 others of his artillery unit had been selected for this duty by their battalion commander, Major Carl W. Hjerpe. Traub and most of his fellow artillerymen were sent to the 27th Marines. Once with their new regiment, they were given the barest of instructions on how to behave in the front lines. Traub remembered that the best advice he received was to “keep your head down, don’t lose touch with the man next to you, and when you get the order to move out, run forward like hell in a zigzag pattern, then hit the deck while rolling away from the spot where you landed and find some sort of cover.”<sup>32</sup> The advice must have worked since Traub survived the battle. How-

ever, he was seriously wounded in the chest on 23 March 1945 as he reached for a cigarette being offered by another Marine. He was eventually pulled to safety by a corpsman, treated, and evacuated to a hospital ship.<sup>33</sup>

## DENOUEMENT

On 26 March 1945, and into the early morning hours of 27 March, approximately 200 Japanese diehards located in the Bloody Gorge on Kitano Point conducted one last military operation. It was not a banzai attack. Instead, it was more akin to a mass infiltration to cause as much death and mayhem as they could before they were inevitably killed by the Americans. The diehards may have been led by Kuribayashi, but it also had been reported that the general had committed suicide in his bunker by this time. His remains have never been found.<sup>34</sup>

The Japanese ultimately broke into the cantonment of the U.S. Army Air Forces 21st Fighter Group, killing at least 44 aviation personnel and wounding another 88 men. These men had recently been sent to the island to escort the Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber formations on their way to the Japanese home islands. U.S. Marine support units, and most notably the 5th Pioneer Battalion, responded to the crisis and eventually killed all the surviving attackers. First Lieutenant Harry L. Martin of Company C, 5th Pioneer Battalion, organized an ad hoc defensive line. Armed only with his .45-caliber pistol and hand grenades, Martin’s gallant stand enabled the Marines to stem the onrushing Japanese tide. Leading a personal charge into a body of the enemy, he was killed by a grenade blast.<sup>35</sup> Martin was later posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Following this attack, the U.S. Army took over full responsibility for further mop-up operations. It should be noted that, beginning

in April 1945, the U.S. Army's 147th Infantry Regiment conducted "over 6,000 daylight patrols and night ambushes," and "continued to combat over 2,500 surviving Japanese defenders until the end of the war." The U.S. Army garrison reported by late June 1945 that they had "taken 867 prisoners and had killed 1,602 Japanese."<sup>36</sup> It also was clear that, by the time of the last organized Japanese attack on the 21st Fighter Group, there were plenty of holdouts still hiding in their tunnels and caves, most likely leaderless and wondering what they should do next. Two Japanese holdouts surrendered as late as 1949.

There can be no doubt that Iwo Jima was the toughest fight of the entire Second World War for the U.S. Marine Corps. Fully one-third of all Marine Corps Medals of Honor (22) awarded during the course of war had their genesis in this single campaign. On 26 March 1945, operational control was passed to the U.S. Army occupation commander and the 147th Infantry Regiment. A few days earlier on 21 March 1945, the last of the second flag-raising party members to be killed on the island lost his life to a sniper. By this point in the battle, reporters had already been asking to interview the members of Rosenthal's famous photograph. Both Sergeant Strank and Corporal Block (and Sergeant Hansen who had originally been misidentified as a second flag raiser) had already been killed in action. At the time, according to Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marine's commanding officer, Captain Severance, reporters wished to interview any of the flag raisers from the Rosenthal photograph still alive on the island. Severance pointed out that Private First Class Rene Gagnon, then presumed to be a flag raiser, "[was] not [then] in the front lines and available to talk to them." However, Private First Class Frank-

lin R. Sousley from Hilltop, Kentucky, was in a very "critical area" and the company commander believed that it was more dangerous to extricate him from his foxhole than to leave him where he was. Unfortunately, Sousley was killed anyway, one of the last Marines in the 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, to die in battle.<sup>37</sup>

The cost to the Marines of the 3d, 4th, and 5th Divisions had been horrific. General Smith noted that the average battalion of 36 officers and 885 enlisted men "was reduced to approximately 16 officers and 300 men at the end of the campaign." He observed that it was not unusual for enlisted men as low ranking as a private first class to be leading platoons by the end of the battle. One captain in the 4th Division commanded his battalion for all but the first two days of the entire campaign. Smith claimed the success of the Marines at Iwo struck at the "falsity of the theory that regiments or battalions which are decimated can never win battles."<sup>38</sup> He was convinced that Marine esprit de corps won the day at Iwo Jima.

War correspondent Robert Sherrod noted that, although the 2d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 5th Division, "suffered heavier casualties than any other battalion on Iwo, the 5th Division's losses in all regiments was fantastically high; the infantry battalion that came off the lightest lost 54 per cent [*sic*] [of its men]." Company B of the 1st Battalion, 28th Marines, "furnished an example of the severity of the losses; [during the battle] the company command changed eight times, the company's second platoon's leadership changed 11 times (five lieutenants, one gunnery sergeant, two corporals, one private first class), and Private Dale O. Cassel Jr. of Sacramento, who served three days until he was killed on 14 March 1945."<sup>39</sup>

By the end of the fighting on Iwo Jima, the



FIGURE 1.13

*Assault units at the Battle of Iwo Jima sustained more than 24,000 casualties, by far the highest single-action losses in Marine Corps history. In remarks made during the dedication of the 3d Marine Division cemetery, General Erskine stated, "Victory was never in doubt. Its cost was. What was in doubt, in all our minds, was whether there would be any of us left to dedicate our cemetery at the end, or whether the last Marine would die knocking out the last Japanese gunner." Army photographer PFC Bruce Elkus captured this photograph at the dedication ceremony on 20 March 1945.*

Official U.S. Army Signal Corps photograph by PFC Bruce Elkus, courtesy of his granddaughter, Marianne Ingleby

Japanese had lost approximately 22,000 men killed in action, though only about 1,000 Japanese soldiers surrendered—many of them had been seriously wounded. More than 6,800 Marines and sailors and at least one Coast Guardsman were killed in action on Iwo. Later, dozens of U.S. Army soldiers and Army Air Forces pilots and crewmen also lost their lives while securing the island. On D+26, Private First Class Anthony Muscarella, a member of Company E, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, noted that “there were 11 of us left from the original com-

pany. All the rest were new faces [replacement drafts]. It did not even look like the E Company that hit the beach.”<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the horrendous casualties and after the fighting was clearly over, many of the surviving Marines took the time to visit the various temporary divisional cemeteries before leaving the island (figure 1.13). The remnants of the gallant 5th Marine Division, “The Spearhead” of the operation, limped back to their camps in Hawaii to rest, recoup, and refit. Iwo Jima was the first and last cam-

paign the division would ever fight (not counting elements of the 5th Division reactivated for a short time during the Vietnam conflict). All six active Marine Corps combat divisions had been slated for participation in Operation Downfall, the invasion of the home islands of Japan scheduled for late 1945 and early 1946. However, their use was negated when the empire of Japan unconditionally surrendered in September 1945, following the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After the war, some of the Iwo veterans stayed in the Corps for their entire career. Captain Fred Haynes of the 28th Regimental Combat Team was one of them. He ultimately rose to the rank of major general and commanded both the 2d and 3d Marine Divisions before retiring from active duty. Others, such as second flag raisers Private First Class Harold Schultz and Private First Class Ira Hayes, were discharged from the Marine Corps immediately after their wartime service concluded. They, like thousands of other individual Marine veterans of the battle, returned home and began their lives anew as private citizens of the United States, though never forgetting what they had lived through and experienced during the battle of Iwo Jima.

## ENDNOTES

1. For the specific costs to the Marine Corps, see Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, 1994), 47. According to Alexander, "In its 36 days of combat on Iwo Jima, the V Amphibious Corps killed approximately 22,000 Japanese soldiers and sailors. The cost was staggering. The assault units of the corps—Marines and organic Navy personnel—sustained 24,053 casualties, by far the highest single-action losses in Marine Corps history."
2. Adm J. J. Clark, USN (Ret), with Clark G. Reynolds, *Carrier Admiral* (New York: David McKay Company, 1967), 162–66, 182–86; and Clark G. Reynolds, *The Fast Carriers: The Forging of an Air Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1968), 235–43. In a unique operational move by the U.S. Navy in mid-1944, the Navy called this massive battle formation Task Force 58 (TF 58) (when it was commanded by Adm Spruance and

- VAdm Mitscher) but changed its name to Task Force 38 (when it was commanded Adm William F. Halsey Jr. and VAdm John S. McCain Sr.). Both task forces largely used, with some notable exceptions, many of the same surface ships and carriers, only changing out the planning staffs. Halsey commanded the U.S. Navy's Third Fleet, while Spruance commanded the Fifth Fleet; hence, the change in numerical designation from TF 38 to TF 58, depending on who was in overall command at any given time.
3. Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. xiv, *Victory in the Pacific, 1945* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), 7. Another excellent study on U.S. naval forces and how they were employed toward the end of WWII is James D. Hornfischer, *The Fleet at Flood Tide: America at Total War in the Pacific, 1944–1945* (New York: Bantam Books, 2016).
  4. Robert Sherrod, *On to Westward: The Battles for Saipan and Iwo Jima* (Baltimore, MD: Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1990), 151. Recently, at least one historian, Robert S. Burrell, has written a strong, well-researched critique that the human cost of taking Iwo Jima was not worth the purported strategic and operational advantages ultimately gained for the United States in the Pacific War. See Robert S. Burrell, *The Ghosts of Iwo Jima* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).
  5. Robert D. Eldridge and Charles W. Tatum, eds., *Fighting Spirit: The Memoirs of Major Yoshitaka Horie and the Battle of Iwo Jima* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 84.
  6. Gen Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, *Coral and Brass* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1948), 245. This is perhaps a bit of hyperbole on the part of Smith. Due to so much of the Japanese resistance being protected underground, it is very difficult to determine if increasing the amount of pre-invasion bombardment to 10 days would have made much of a difference in the Marine casualty levels. It may have, but Smith noted that the amount of antiaircraft fire coming from Iwo Jima increased following 70 days of pre-invasion heavy bombing by U.S. Army Air Forces.
  7. Capt Clifford P. Morehouse, USMCR, *The Iwo Jima Operation* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1959), 124. It should be noted that the Marine Corps History Division historians gathered this data "almost verbatim" from the V Amphibious Corps Landing Force Action Report, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
  8. Morehouse, *The Iwo Jima Operation*, 125; and Military Intelligence Division, "Minefield Patterns in the Defense of Iwo Jima," *Intelligence Bulletin* 3, no. 10 (June 1945): 15–19.
  9. Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 176.
  10. MajGen Fred Haynes, USMC (Ret), and James A. Warren, *The Lions of Iwo Jima: The Story of Combat Team 28 and the Bloodiest Battle in Marine Corps History* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008), 76.
  11. Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 177–78.
  12. Clarence E. Willie, *African American Voices from Iwo Jima:*

- Personal Accounts of the Battle* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2010), 159–60. Depot companies were part of what was called “Corps Troops” and not assigned to any specific combat division. However, their service was invaluable throughout the course of the battle.
13. Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 180.
  14. Jack H. Lucas with D. K. Drum, *Indestructible: The Unforgettable Story of a Marine Hero at the Battle of Iwo Jima* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006), 96–101. The story of Jacklyn Lucas is one of the most incredible stories of heroism recorded during the Second World War. Lucas had illegally enlisted in the Marine Corps as an underage minor; according to his memoirs, Lucas was 14 years old when he enlisted. Temporarily assigned to duty in Hawaii, it was soon discovered that Lucas was very much underage and a habitual disciplinary problem, so the Marine Corps began the process of discharging him. Instead, Lucas managed to secretly stow away on the USS *Deuel* (APA 160), then being fitted out to carry elements of the 5th Marine Division to Iwo Jima. Revealing himself to members of the 26th Regiment on 8 February 1945, Lucas convinced the commanding officer to assign him to the 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, the same unit as his cousin. Jacklyn Lucas turned 17 years old on the same day he was so horrifically wounded by Japanese grenades. He was the youngest Marine to ever receive the Medal of Honor.
  15. After Action Report, Combat Team 28, February–March 1945, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
  16. Bradley and Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers*, 318. Most historical accounts credit a Marine Corps desire for a larger, more visible flag to sustain morale throughout the battle as the primary justification for replacing the first flag.
  17. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 60–61. Although now somewhat obsolete due to recent revelations concerning the identities of the first and second flag-raising parties on Mount Suribachi on D+4, *Shadow of Suribachi* is an excellent resource for determining the actual timeline of events that took place that day.
  18. Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 181, 189, 192.
  19. Reference to Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), “Iwo Jima: ‘Hell with the Fire Out’,” *Leatherneck*, 78, no. 2, February 1945, 14–23.
  20. Robert K. Krick, *A Virginia Marine on Iwo Jima* (Appomattox, VA: H. E. Howard, 1987), 35–36.
  21. Krick, *A Virginia Marine on Iwo Jima*, 35–36.
  22. Haynes and Warren, *The Lions of Iwo Jima*, 164–65.
  23. Casualty cards for Sgts Henry O. Hansen and Michael Strank, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
  24. Casualty card for LtCol Chandler W. Johnson, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
  25. Capt Raymond Henri et al., *The U.S. Marines on Iwo Jima* (New York: Dial Press, 1945), 163. Henri and the other Marine Corps authors—1stLt Jim G. Lucas, TSgt W. Keyes Beech, TSgt David K. Dempsey, and TSgt Alvin M. Josephy Jr.—were combat correspondents who covered the combat activity of all three Marine combat divisions throughout the battle for Iwo Jima.
  26. Morehouse, *The Iwo Jima Operation*, 65.
  27. Burrell, *The Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 73–74; and Morehouse, *The Iwo Jima Operation*, 66–67.
  28. Morehouse, *The Iwo Jima Operation*, 73–78.
  29. Henri et al., *The U.S. Marines on Iwo Jima*, 169.
  30. Morehouse, *The Iwo Jima Operation*, 85.
  31. Haynes and Warren, *The Lions of Iwo Jima*, 210–11.
  32. Haynes and Warren, *The Lions of Iwo Jima*, 216–18.
  33. Theorywolf, “Iwo Jima Vet M1 Helmet and Grouping,” U.S. Militaria Forum, 16 January 2011.
  34. Burrell, *The Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 79.
  35. Larry Smith, *Iwo Jima: World War II Veterans Remember the Greatest Battle of the Pacific* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).
  36. Burrell, *The Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 80, 83. See also Doug Nash’s chapter, “Going to ‘Tojo’s Front Door’: Recalling the U.S. Army’s Role and the Flag Raising at Iwo Jima,” in this volume.
  37. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 98. PhM2c John Bradley, PFC Rene Gagnon, and PFC Ira Hayes were ordered back to the United States in early April 1945 by the president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt would pass away on 12 April 1945. Vice President Harry S. Truman assumed the presidency and one of his first acts was to kick off the Seventh War Bond campaign. Since Rosenthal’s iconic photograph had been selected as the drive’s emblematic logo, the two Marines and one Navy corpsman met the new president on 20 April and immediately launched into the whirlwind of the bond drive. The presumed flag raisers would be accompanied on this tour by TSgt W. Keyes Beech. Beech was the combat correspondent who most closely covered the activities of the 28th Marines during their time on Iwo Jima. See Albee and Freeman, “Heroes on Parade,” in *Shadow of Suribachi*. For a detailed explanation of whom the Marine Corps now believes is pictured in the iconic Rosenthal photograph, see Mary Reinwald and Keil Gentry’s chapters in this volume.
  38. Smith and Finch, *Coral and Brass*, 275.
  39. Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 214–15.
  40. Anthony Muscarella, *Iwo Jima: The Young Heroes* (Memphis, TN: Freedom Press, 1989), 95. PFC Muscarella was, like Medal of Honor recipient Jacklyn Lucas, significantly underage when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. As with Lucas, he also was recognized for gallantry in action and was awarded the Silver Star by Gen Clifton B. Cates for repelling an infiltration attack on his company on the night of 24 February 1945. Muscarella was singlehandedly responsible for killing eight Japanese soldiers attempting to infiltrate his company area.

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GOING TO  
“TOJO’S FRONT DOOR”  
*Recalling the U.S. Army’s Role and the  
Flag Raising at Iwo Jima*

*by Colonel Douglas E. Nash Sr., USA (Ret)*

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### INTRODUCTION

Ever since two American flags were raised atop Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945, many legends and myths have arisen from the Battle of Iwo Jima, an iconic Marine Corps fight. This most celebrated of all Marine battles has done more than any other to cement the public perception of the Corps as the nation’s premier fighting force, one willing to pay any price or bear any burden to achieve its objectives. The loss of 24,053 Marines and sailors from the 3d, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions at Iwo Jima, including more than 6,140 men killed in action on land and sea, was the cost of this reputation, representing the “highest single-action losses in Marine Corps history.”<sup>1</sup> One of the most persistent myths is that this was an all-Marine and Navy battle fought without the aid of the U.S. Army or Army Air Forces.<sup>2</sup> Recently uncovered official U.S. Army records stored at the National Archives, as well as a review of Marine Corps historical accounts published nearly 50 years ago, have now come to light that prove there was yet another flag raising carried out during the Iwo Jima campaign, but with a difference.

Instead of being raised aloft by Marines, this flag was planted by soldiers of the U.S. Army. Thus, on 5 May 1945, Major Richard R. Morrison raised a flag on Minami Island near Iwo Jima, marking his Service’s contribution. While the Marines’ flag marked the beginning of operations, because they were often the “first to fight,” this flag marks the Army’s contribution that required an equally dirty fight within the mopping-up and occupation phase.

At the time the Army’s flag raising occurred, nearly every American in and out of uniform must have been aware of the iconic image taken by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal, which had been widely reproduced in a variety of news publications as well as in soldier’s magazines and newspapers, such as *Yank* and *Stars and Stripes*, during the previous two months. But the Army’s flag raising received little notice; in this instance, the oversight might have been due to the overwhelming media exposure of the Rosenthal photograph and its subsequent featuring in the nation’s seventh war bond drive, or possibly to the fact that no photograph of any Army flag raising had

yet to emerge. Even the U.S. Army's official account of the bloody campaign in the Pacific fails to mention it or an Army regiment's participation in the battle. Today, joint operations are widely conducted and are important for the protection of U.S. national security and world peace from terrorism and other threats, but successful joint operations are not new. Perhaps it is time to resurrect this event from obscurity and to credit the equally obscure Army infantry regiment that raised it.

The Battle of Iwo Jima, known officially as the Iwo Jima Operation by the Navy and Marine Corps, and as the Bonin-Volcano Islands Operation by the U.S. Army, was a joint operation from its inception, with the Army and Army Air Forces contributing significantly to the battle's outcome and the island's subsequent role as a base to support bombing raids against mainland Japan. In fact, besides contributing more than 20,000 troops to the island's garrison after the Marines departed in early April 1945, the Army contributed an entire infantry regiment—the 147th Infantry Regiment—that joined the battle on 21 March 1945, fought the Japanese die-hard survivors until the end of July 1945, and even conducted a flag raising ceremony of its own. This, then, is the story of that regiment and of the flag-raising ceremony they conducted during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

## HISTORY OF THE REGIMENT

The 147th Infantry Regiment, a unit of the Ohio National Guard, was activated and inducted into federal service on 15 October 1940, more than a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Recruited mainly from the Cincinnati area, the regiment was an integral part of the state's 37th Infantry Division and traced its roots back to the American Civil War, where

it was originally known as the 6th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Redesignated as the 147th Infantry Regiment on 25 October 1917, it was federalized and deployed to France as part of the 37th Infantry Division during World War I, where it fought as part of the American Expeditionary Forces under General John J. Pershing.<sup>3</sup> During World War II, the 37th Infantry Division was shipped out to the South Pacific four months after Pearl Harbor and was assigned to defend the strategically important Fijian islands beginning in April 1942.

The 147th Infantry temporarily detached from its parent division, which remained behind in Fiji, and took part in the Battle of Guadalcanal. These soldiers experienced sustained jungle fighting from early November 1942 to early February 1943. An integral part of the Composite Army-Marine (CAM) Division, the regiment played a prominent role in the final battles for the island, which ended in victory with Japan's evacuation of its surviving troops by 8 February 1943.<sup>4</sup> After the island was declared secure on 9 February, the 147th Infantry was retained as the Allies' "mopping-up" force, remaining behind as the island's garrison, while the rest of the 37th Infantry Division, which never served on Guadalcanal, deployed elsewhere. Permanently relieved from assignment to its parent division on 31 July 1943, the 147th Infantry Regiment would thereafter operate separately as an independent regiment (figure 2.1). It was frequently attached to Marine Corps units or served under Navy command as it would later do at Iwo Jima.

Usually the regiment's mission, similar to that of the Marine Corps' own base defense battalions, was to mop up in the wake of amphibious assaults and to prepare to defend against Japanese counterlandings. Mopping-up essentially consists of identifying and



FIGURE 2.1

*Prior to deploying to Iwo Jima, troops from the 147th Infantry conduct a machine gun firing range on the island of New Caledonia, including captured Japanese weapons, such as this 7.7mm Nambu Type 92 heavy machine gun, 24 November 1944.*

Official U.S. Army Signal Corps photo

eliminating any remaining enemy resistance by thoroughly combing through terrain that has already been taken. The soldiers of the 147th Infantry performed this duty at Emirau Island, Papua New Guinea, while attached to the 4th Marine Division from 11 April to 1 July 1944, where its men saw no combat except the constant battle against boredom and mosquitoes. However, rather than allowing the regiment to grow stale while performing glorified garrison duty in the wake of the Marine Corps' seizure of the island, the regimental commander, Colonel William B. Tuttle Jr., insisted that it fill its daily calendar with training activities, ranging from refresher courses on individual skills, such as rifle marksmanship and patrolling, all the way up to battalion-level field exercises. Moreover, the regiment routinely reviewed lessons learned from its experience on Guadalcanal and incorporated as many of these as possible into its standard operating procedures. Toward the end of 1944, it also conducted competitions between the various companies of the regiment and staged training events so that even cooks

and clerks were given the opportunity to fire and become familiar with American as well as Japanese weapons.<sup>5</sup>

Based on battle experience gained on Guadalcanal and during its employment since, the regiment also insisted that when its platoons and companies went into battle they carry additional automatic weapons and flamethrowers, which had proved their utility on Guadalcanal and would once again be used at Iwo Jima when the time came. These weapons, such as Browning Automatic Rifles and Thompson submachine guns, enabled the average rifle platoon of the 147th Infantry to field far more firepower than the standard Army rifle platoon of the time. While the regiment formally adhered to the U.S. Army's standard table of organization and equipment, its squads were habitually reinforced by each company's heavy weapons platoon or the battalion weapons company, which provided these additional weapons, such as flamethrowers, in direct support (i.e., their use was directed by the squad leader). This went against Army doctrinal practice, which generally prescribed keeping these assets employed at the company or battalion level where they would provide general support to squads and platoons. The tactical situation on Iwo Jima demanded otherwise, and the success of this practice speaks for itself (figure 2.2). This action also does not rule out the then-common practice of using additional weapons—"battlefield pickups"—found on the field to supplement unit arsenals.

These additional weapons and the knowledge of how to more effectively employ them would stand the soldiers in good stead at Iwo Jima. However, as 1944 neared its end, the regiment, occupying temporary quarters on the island of New Caledonia, had no idea as to where it would be deployed next; although,



FIGURE 2.2

*Capt James T. Kolb, commander of Company A, 147th Infantry, assisted by Sgt. John E. Keogh use a flamethrower against dug in Japanese troops on Iwo Jima, 20 April 1945. Kolb was wounded in action several days after this photograph was taken.*

Photo courtesy of Thomas McLeod, Museum of the Pacific, Texarkana, TX

many of its men were anticipating the war's end, believing that they would all soon be going home.

## INTO THE FIGHT

These hopes were shattered shortly after the 1945 New Year's celebrations were concluded, when the regiment's new commander, Colonel Robert F. Johnson, informed his men that "we're going right up into [General Hideki] Tojo's front yard." Though the location of the next campaign was still a secret, Johnson stressed the seriousness of their upcoming as-

signment, stating that "every man must know this and every man must be prepared."<sup>6</sup> Thereafter commenced an intensive training schedule for the regiment, which had lost nearly half of its experienced personnel due to the troop rotation program, which mandated that troops who had been in the Pacific theater for a certain number of months be sent home to the United States. Courses in jungle warfare were set up on New Caledonia, firing ranges were built to hone infantry skills, and instruction in amphibious operations was given to officers and noncommissioned officers. What Johnson

surely knew, but his men did not, was that the regiment would face a determined enemy when they landed at Iwo Jima. As the Marines would soon learn after they landed on 19 February (D-day), the Japanese would defend the island, seen as Japanese soil, with unparalleled fanaticism. By 24 February, the day after the U.S. flag was raised over Iwo Jima, the 147th Infantry was ready. Meanwhile, the Marines, who had landed on Iwo Jima the week prior, had been experiencing hard fighting and had already lost a significant number of men to the fervent resistance of the Japanese.

Fewer than two dozen men of the 147th Infantry's advance party had sailed with the invasion force, consisting of V Amphibious Corps with its three Marine divisions, at the beginning of February. The main body of the regiment (codenamed Task Unit 11.1.2) with its three battalions, Cannon Company, Antitank Company, and headquarters troops began loading on four troop transports on 24 February and sailed on 4 March 1945 for the invasion force's staging base at Eniwetok atoll. After dropping anchor on 14 March, the regiment was told that it would remain at Eniwetok until 31 March (D+40), when it would be called forward to begin its assignment as Iwo Jima's garrison troops, responsible for base defense as it had been at Guadalcanal, Emirau, and New Caledonia.<sup>7</sup> Any relief the men felt upon hearing this did not last long; within hours after their arrival at Eniwetok, the regimental commander received a message from the commander of Task Force 53 participating in the amphibious assault on Iwo Jima, Navy Admiral Harry W. Hill, stating: "Request Task Unit 11.1.2 carrying 147th Inf. be directed proceed [*sic*] Iwo Jima earliest practicable date."<sup>8</sup> The message did not state why they were so badly needed. After only a few hours at Eniwetok, the ships carrying the

2,952 men of the regiment weighed anchor and departed that same day (map 2).

The men learned, while en route to Iwo Jima, that the 147th Infantry had been attached to the 3d Marine Division. What had prompted the early departure, of course, was that the seizure of Iwo Jima had proven to be far tougher than the Marines anticipated. Japanese resistance was as stubborn as it was fierce. Losses in the Marine divisions taking part in the assault—3d, 4th, and 5th Divisions—had been astronomical; in this action, battalions had been reduced to companies and companies to platoons after only a few days of fighting. Consequently, there were far fewer Marines available to finish mopping-up duties on the island. The 147th Infantry's task on the island had been to do garrison duty after the Marines completed the mop-up phase; however, by the time the regiment arrived, thousands of Japanese defenders still refused to surrender, requiring more ground troops than anticipated to hunt them out of their underground stronghold and kill them. Before the island could be declared secured, these diehards would have to be dealt with. The available evidence indicates that the 147th Infantry was unaware of the magnitude of the fighting that lay ahead of them, though they knew that mopping up after the Marines would not be easy. Despite the prolongation of the campaign, one of Iwo Jima's three air fields had already been placed into limited operation to handle the crippled bombers returning from air raids on the Japanese mainland needing emergency landing strips, a course preferable to ditching the craft in the ocean.

The ships bearing the 147th Infantry arrived off the coast of Iwo Jima at 1335 on 20 March 1945. Its members saw the battered peak of Mount Suribachi for the first time and heard the sounds of the ongoing battle. In the



words of the regimental commander, “Everyone strained to see how he would physically fit into the regiment’s mission on the island.”<sup>9</sup> By that point, Rosenthal’s widely publicized photograph of the flag raising on 23 February would have been seen by the men of the 147th Infantry; certainly, they could not have missed seeing the flag still flying atop Mount Suribachi the day they arrived on Iwo, since it was visible from any point on the island.

The regiment’s initial orders had read that the 147th Infantry would defend the new base to be built on Iwo Jima by organizing positions at probable landing beaches, perform continuous observation of the whole coastline, and prepare inland and final defensive positions. These orders were changed that same afternoon to reflect that it would now conduct a relief in place of elements of 3d Marine Division, then engaged in deadly mopping-up operations, and “assist Marine forces in clearing the island of remaining Japanese defenders and stragglers.”<sup>10</sup> It would not, as originally believed, become a component of the Army garrison force, at least for the next two weeks (figure 2.3).

To carry out its new assignment, the regiment disembarked from its transports at Purple Beach on the island’s southwest coast at dawn on 21 March 1945 and occupied its assembly area in Target Area 183-Golf near Motoyama Airfield No. 2 by late that morning (see map 2). The regimental commander and his staff had already met with Marine Corps Major General Graves B. Erskine, the commanding general of 3d Marine Division, at his command post earlier that day, where they received the details

about the 147th Infantry’s new assignment.<sup>11</sup> The following day, 1st and 2d Battalions were informed that they would be attached to 21st Marine Regiment and would relieve its 2d and 3d Battalions on 23 March 1945. The 147th Infantry’s 3d Battalion was ordered to immediately begin patrolling around the base of Mount Suribachi, atop of which the flag that had been planted by the Marines on 23 February still fluttered for all to see.

Each of the regiment’s three battalions was assigned its own sector, with the island divided roughly into thirds: 1st Battalion drew the east coast from Target Area 236-Dog to Target Area 186-Able, stretching inland to form a triangle that included Motoyama Airfield No. 3; 2d Battalion was assigned the northeast coast of the island from Target Area 251-Fox to Target Area 236-Dog, reaching inland to the western edge of Airfield No. 3; and 3d Battalion was given the defense of the east and west beaches (see map 2). On its first day of combat, patrols from 1st Battalion killed 23 Japanese while being guided into their new area by Marines familiar with the area. Japanese troops probed their defensive positions that evening, randomly tossing hand grenades that kept everyone awake in their foxholes.

Thus commenced what would prove to be a grueling and dangerous assignment. The soldiers of the 147th Infantry now confronted the enemy face to face for the first time since the Battle of Guadalcanal two years prior. The battalions sent out patrols, set up ambushes, and exploited abandoned tunnels and caves during the day; at night, they sprang ambushes upon Japanese troops who had left their underground warrens to search for food and water. It was a bloody business; for example, the troops of the 147th Infantry employed highly effective “corkscrew and blowtorch” tactics, involving the lib-

MAP 2 (opposite)

*Special operations map for the assault on Iwo Jima, prepared by the 64th Engineer Topographical Battalion, U.S. Army Forces in the Central Pacific Area, 23 October 1944.*

Marine Corps History Division



FIGURE 2.3

*A Japanese soldier being searched by troops of the 147th Infantry Regiment after emerging from an Iwo Jima cave in which he, along with 20 other Japanese, had been hiding for several days. To the left, a Japanese medical officer acts as a translator.*  
Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC Bruce Elkus via his granddaughter Marianne Ingleby

eral use of satchel charges and flamethrowers, that Marines and soldiers had developed at Peleliu during the previous autumn and were widely disseminated throughout the Pacific (figure 2.4).<sup>12</sup> These tactics forced the Japanese out of their fighting positions, where they would be killed out in the open by overwhelming automatic weapons fire or sealed within their caves. At night, ambush patrols reported sighting dozens of unsuspecting Japanese, who brazenly penetrated American defensive positions to steal food, weapons and, above all, water.

The regiment's area of responsibility soon

grew when, on 26 March, it was assigned the sector being vacated by the hard-hit 5th Marine Division, which was being shipped out to be rebuilt for the impending invasion of the Japanese mainland. It was also the same day that Iwo Jima was officially declared "secure," signifying the point in the operation when overall command of land forces was finally handed over to the U.S. Army Garrison Force, under Army Air Forces Major General James E. Chaney, who relieved Marine Corps Major General Harry Schmidt of V Amphibious Corps.<sup>13</sup>

Placing the 147th Infantry into the line of



FIGURE 2.4

*When all else failed. Sometimes, when Japanese troops refused to surrender or leave their underground hideouts, and when entreaties from other prisoners to give up had failed, U.S. troops had to resort to use of flamethrowers to burn them out on Iwo Jima, ca. April 1945.*  
Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC Bruce Elkus via his granddaughter Marianne Ingleby

battle on 23 March did have one adverse impact though. During the early morning hours of 26 March, a number of Japanese survivors launched a final, desperate attack against the bivouac area of the Army's garrison force located near Airfield No. 1 in Target Area 198-Juliet, which was occupied at the time by a number of Army Air Forces fighter pilots from VII Fighter Command, a field hospital, U.S. Navy Seabees, and the Marines' 5th Pioneer Battalion, 5th Marine Division, and 8th Field Depot, V Amphibious Corps (see map 2). Fifty-

three Americans were slain and 119 wounded before a counterattack by the Seabees and 5th Pioneer Battalion, reinforced by elements of the 28th Marine Regiment, then in the process of redeploying aboard their troopships, were able to systematically hunt down and kill the Japanese. A total of 223 enemy bodies were initially counted, with the total rising to 300 before it was all over.<sup>14</sup>

Had the 147th Infantry not been engaged in widespread mopping-up operations at the time, it may well have been available as the gar-

ri-son security force as was originally intended, and the impact of the Japanese attack might not have been as significant. As it was, it was bad enough, and thereafter until the last Japanese defender was accounted for, security, especially in the bivouac areas, was strictly maintained. Another result was that, on 26 March, the 147th Infantry was directed by Headquarters, 3d Marine Division, to maintain a company-size general reserve, or reaction force, near the airfield at all times should future incidents such as the 23 March attack reoccur.<sup>15</sup>

## RELIEVING THE MARINES

The land forces had come under control of General Chaney on 26 March, yet Major General Erskine of 3d Marine Division continued to serve as the commander of ground combat forces until 4 April 1945. With this development, the regiment now was responsible for the defense of nearly the entire island, including Mount Suribachi, with the exception of the eastern portion of the island that remained under the control of the 9th Marine Regiment. The 147th Infantry Regiment continued its operations, maintaining a rapid tempo designed to prevent the Japanese survivors from coalescing and carrying out large-scale attacks against the American units, which now primarily consisted of Marine units recovering from the battle, antiaircraft units, and construction battalions preparing the three airfields as permanent bases. The pace of operations continued through the end of the month and beyond; by 31 March, the 147th Infantry had killed 387 Japanese troops and had captured 17 (figure 2.5). In turn, the regiment had lost 8 men killed in action and 53 wounded.<sup>16</sup> It was a clear sign that mopping up would not be easy.

On 4 April, the 147th Infantry relieved the



FIGURE 2.5

*Four Japanese prisoners, part of a group of 20 taken alive by a mop-up squad from the 147th Infantry, are interrogated by a Japanese-speaking American soldier. Many of the Japanese soldiers were surprised to learn that their captors were not the fanatics they had been led to believe all Americans were. Among the first things they received were first aid and American cigarettes.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC Bruce Elkus via his granddaughter Marianne Ingleby

last remaining Marine unit on the island—the 9th Marine Regiment—and from that point onward was solely responsible for finishing the mop up on Iwo Jima as well as acting as its defense force (figure 2.6). After Major General Erskine departed and the Army’s operations continued, Erskine showed appreciation for the regiment’s service while attached to his division in his 11 April 1945 commendation letter, writing, “The 147th Infantry Regiment displayed in their debarkation, movement into positions and execution of assigned missions a fine spirit of cooperation and a commendable eagerness for combat” and was “an inspiration to all hands.”<sup>17</sup> While the Marines were now free to prepare for their next mission, the 147th Infantry’s primary mission was just beginning.

Until the end of July, when the last Japanese die-hard defender was dispatched, the 147th Infantry Regiment carried out its deadly



FIGURE 2.6

*Soldiers of the 147th Infantry provide cover for two Marines engaging Japanese holdouts with a bazooka on Iwo Jima. This image clearly illustrates the rugged terrain U.S. troops faced when carrying out mopping-up operations on the northern half of the island, ca. March 1945.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC Bruce Elkus via his granddaughter Marianne Ingleby

task with monotonous regularity. Patrols and security sweeps occupied the day and ambush patrols the night. As one day followed another, the number of Japanese killed or captured continued to mount; for example, 963 were killed in April alone, with another 664 captured. The corkscrew and blowtorch tactics continued unabated. Japanese refusing to leave their caves were sealed within by explosives or killed when gasoline was pumped into their hideouts and ignited. In May, 252 were killed, while 186 surrendered, choosing to live instead.

A platoon of Japanese-speaking Nisei was attached to the regiment, whose communication of appeals in the defenders' native language helped make the "dishonorable" act of surrender more palatable.<sup>18</sup> As time went by, more and more Japanese chose this way out, though diehards continued to exercise their influence on isolated parties who chose to either fight to the death or commit suicide rather than surrender. Many Japanese prisoners of

war (POWs) chose to help their captors convince their countrymen to surrender rather than needlessly killing themselves. By the end of June, the number of Japanese killed had fallen to 17, with only 6 surrendering. After that month, only occasional living Japanese were spotted, though when captured most of them proved to be impressed Korean laborers. These events—the Army's hard-fought battles, Japanese surrenders, and the presence of Korean laborers—demonstrates that the narrative of Iwo Jima has been simplified in historical memory. Events here were far more complex than Rosenthal's image could convey.

The regiment's core strength was decreased on 30 June, when its 1st Battalion was relieved from its duties and embarked aboard the USS *Rockwall* (APA 230), which sailed to the island of Tinian, where the battalion would provide security for the top-secret Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber unit designated to drop two atomic bombs on mainland Japan.<sup>19</sup> Thus, reduced in size by one-third, the regiment was forced to do the same amount of patrolling with fewer men with its two remaining battalions (figure 2.7). A levy of 18 company-grade officers took place on 29 May 1945, further sapping the regiment's strength. Urgently needed for the Battle of Okinawa, where the casualty rate of Army lieutenants and captains had been extremely high since the invasion of that island began on 1 April 1945, these seasoned officers volunteered to depart Iwo Jima for a tour of duty with the Army's 96th Infantry Division even though they could have remained on Iwo Jima.<sup>20</sup>

After 30 June, the now-understrength 147th Infantry worked slowly and methodically, taking no chances and using as much firepower as the situation demanded. Since the island had been declared secure since 26 March, the sol-

diers had no rigid timetable to adhere to, unlike the Marines, who had been forced to take enormous risks to secure their objectives according to schedule. To help address this shortage of frontline troops, the regiment's Cannon and Antitank Companies were both employed in the line as infantry. Even with this augmentation, there still were not enough troops to cover everything. Additionally, the regiment continued to suffer casualties, usually caused by Japanese mines, snipers, booby traps, and machine gun fire. The ability of the Japanese to infiltrate American positions at night was astonishing, but once they had left their concealed positions, they were fair game for the numerous ambush patrols the 147th Infantry sent out each night.

On 4 June 1945, the enormous cave complex reputedly used as the underground headquarters of the island's commander, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, was discovered. Although the 147th Infantry had already identified and exploited several other large underground complexes, this one located on the island's northeast quadrant was the largest. A patrol from Company F, led by Lieutenant James J. Ahern, found the cave still defended by the enemy, who refused calls to surrender. Calling forward a demolition team from the regiment's Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon, led by Lieutenant Joseph Lenoir, the soldiers pumped in hundreds of gallons of gasoline and set it alight. The resulting fire ignited a quantity of ammunition stored inside, killing or wounding many of the surviving occupants who had not committed suicide. Fifty-four survivors surrendered, though two killed themselves shortly afterward.<sup>21</sup>

An exploration of the cave complex soon followed, revealing several subterranean levels that contained offices, ammunition and ration storage areas, sleeping quarters, and radio

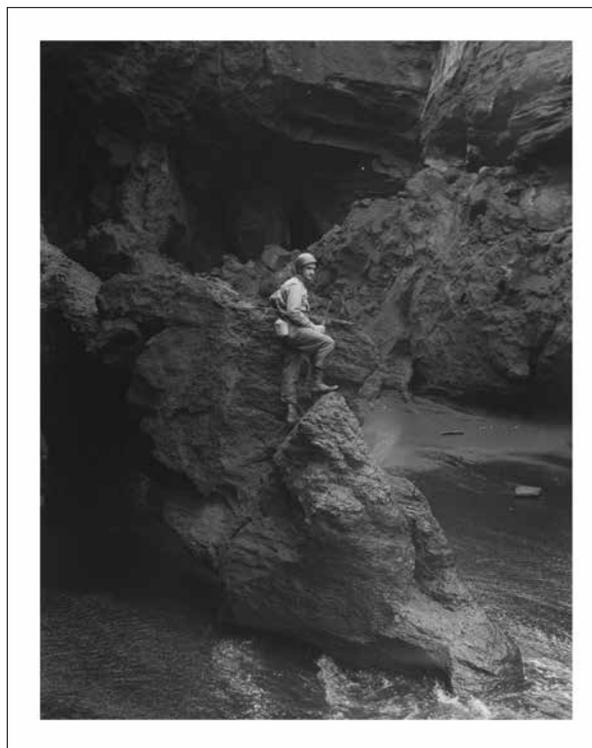


FIGURE 2.7

*A soldier of the 147th Infantry, perched on the edge of a cliff on the island's northeast corner, pauses before leading a search of a cave complex carved out of the island's rocky soil. During these mop-up operations, the 147th Infantry captured or killed thousands of Japanese troops.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC Bruce Elkus via his granddaughter Marianne Ingleby

rooms, all linked by interconnecting tunnels so large that the Americans could walk upright through them. The general's quarters consisted of several smaller rooms, reinforced with concrete, and fitted with multiple escape hatches. A number of bodies were found inside, all of them showing signs of having committed suicide. However, General Kuribayashi's remains were not found within, as it was believed he had died or had committed suicide during a counterattack carried out several weeks prior. Lieutenant Lenoir and his men made several detailed sketches of this cave complex as well as several others, mute testimony to the tunneling skills of the Japanese, who had moved nearly their entire force underground before the Ma-



FIGURE 2.8

*Army PFC Bruce Elkus, Photo Assignment Detachment 11, 3116th Signal Service Battalion, stands on Red Beach, Iwo Jima, with Mount Suribachi and the famous flag raised on 23 February 1945 visible in the distance.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy of PFC Bruce Elkus via his granddaughter Marianne Ingleby

rine assault commenced on 19 February 1945. With their inspections complete, Lenoir, who had been an Oklahoma oil field “wildcatter” in civilian life, had his men seal the caves shut with explosives to prevent them from being reoccupied by the enemy.<sup>22</sup>

On 11 April, an 11-man ambush patrol from Company A, led by its commander, Captain James T. Kolb, took the largest number of prisoners at one time during the entire battle of Iwo Jima near Target Area 202-Fox, located on the eastern portion of the island. When the patrol spotted two Japanese soldiers emerging from a hole near its ambush position during the early morning hours, Kolb’s men opened fire, killing one and seriously wounding the other. Despite his wounds, the Japanese soldier managed to crawl back into the hole, prompting Kolb to use his Nisei interpreter, Sergeant Ritsuwo Tanaka, to call to the Japanese to come out and surrender or they would be sealed up

alive with explosives. After a brief negotiation, Kolb learned that his patrol had stumbled upon the hospital of the *2d Mixed Brigade*, located 100 feet underground. The Japanese, led by senior medical officer Major Masaru Inaoka, called for a vote of surrender—69 men voted “aye” and 3 voted “nay” and immediately committed suicide, allowing the others to depart unharmed.

During the next several hours, Kolb and his men assisted 13 Japanese medical officers, 1 warrant officer, and 59 medical enlisted men as they crawled through the cave’s two-foot-square exit. Several wounded men being treated in the hospital also were evacuated. In addition to bringing out all of their medical supplies, the hospital also presented the Americans with six flags and several Samurai swords, which Kolb’s men kept. When asked by the interpreter why he had surrendered with all of his men, the Japanese hospital commander replied that he thought his situation was hopeless and that he trusted that the Americans would obey the “International Conventions of the Red Cross.”<sup>23</sup> So many were taken prisoner that trucks had to be requested to pick up and drop off all of the Japanese at the island’s POW facility.

Day by day, the gruesome death toll mounted, as well as the number of captures, such that by 30 June 1945, the regiment had killed 1,602 Japanese holdouts and had captured 867 more, accounting for nearly 2,500 of the enemy. The number who died in sealed caves will never be known. In return, the 147th Infantry Regiment suffered the loss of 15 men killed in action and another 144 wounded, as well as dozens more to noncombat-related injuries or sickness (figure 2.8). Many Japanese, whether dead or captured, showed no signs of starvation or privation at all, and a number of them were carrying American weapons, grenades, and even

GI-issue items, such as ponchos, shelter halves, and leggings.

## AN ARMY FLAG RAISING

With the island declared secure for more than a month, members of the 147th Infantry held its own flag-raising ceremony. The Marines in the midst of taking the island took the time to raise the flag, and the Army's flag represented the coda to the battle. Although it did not occur on the island of Iwo Jima proper, unlike the actual flag raisings that took place on Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945, the Army *did* raise the American flag on the neighboring island of Minami, a scant 35 miles south-southeast of Iwo Jima. Considered part of the Volcano Islands group, with Iwo Jima forming the largest island, the 1.37-square-mile island of Minami, also known as Minami Iwo Jima or South Iwo Jima, had to be searched and secured to ensure that no Japanese forces held it that might interfere with flight operations on Iwo Jima.

Accordingly, the 147th Infantry was notified on 2 May 1945 by the U.S. Army Garrison Force headquarters that it was to conduct a reconnaissance of the island the following day. Adverse weather prevented Company C, which had been selected to carry out the mission, from departing Iwo Jima until 5 May 1945. As a result, 4 May was used for planning and rehearsals, while Major Richard Morrison, the 1st Battalion operations officer, selected to lead the mission, carried out an aerial reconnaissance that afternoon. No enemy were spotted on the island, so plans were advanced that evening for the amphibious task force, which was to consist of 111 men from Company C, 39 from Company B, 5 medical personnel, and Army photographer Private First Class Bruce Elkus, to depart from White Beach no. 2 at 0233 the morning of 5 May 1945. At the last moment, Major Morrison's force was joined

aboard Landing Craft, Infantry 1094 (LCI 1094) by three "observers" from the Army garrison force headquarters.<sup>24</sup>

Morrison's task force arrived at the island at 0630 and began circling its four-and-a-half-mile shoreline in search of possible landing beaches. No signs of life were detected, and the LCI lowered its ramp 30 feet from the north-eastern shoreline. Striking rocks, the ship withdrew and launched its dingy, which succeeded in landing a six-man shore party at 0916 to patrol the area in search of a better landing site. Spotting nothing of importance other than a wrecked Japanese airplane and large quantities of washed-up Marine supplies, including crates of C-rations, the patrol was surprised when they flushed an enemy soldier out of his hiding place an hour later.<sup>25</sup> This soldier, who proved to a Korean crew survivor from a Japanese transport that had been sunk at least 40 days earlier, spoke no English but could read and write in the language. Upon interrogation, he wrote that he was the island's only inhabitant, and had been subsisting off of washed-up C-rations and rainwater.

After being told by radio that the island was clear, Major Morrison and four others, including the photographer, left the LCI aboard the ship's dingy an hour later. The small boat overturned in the surf, dumping its passengers 40–50 feet from the shore, forcing them to swim the rest of the way. Despite this mishap, Elkus and all of his photographic equipment were retrieved and safely landed. At noon, Morrison and his waterlogged party had reached the summit on the island's southeast tip and raised the American flag in a brief ceremony.<sup>26</sup> Morrison, who had written a short statement to mark the occasion, said

*As an officer of the United States Army, and under authority invested [sic] in me by the Congress of the United States, I hereby do take*

*possession of this island, Minami Iwo Jima,  
in the name of the United States of America.*<sup>27</sup>

It is assumed that Private First Class Elkus recorded this solemn moment on film, but to date, none of his photographs of the event have been discovered.<sup>28</sup> It would have been interesting to see how this purely symbolic ceremony carried out by the 147th Infantry compared to or was influenced by the one conducted six weeks earlier atop Mount Suribachi by the Marines. After all, Morrison had not been ordered to raise the flag, only to conduct a reconnaissance of the island; so perhaps the flag-raising ceremony was carried out on his own initiative.

Major Morrison and his landing party, along with their prisoner, then tried to return to the ship by rubber raft, since their dingy had been smashed on the rocks earlier while attempting to land. Finally, after several attempts and another capsizing, the major and his men were safely back on board LCI 1094 by 1719 that afternoon. Private First Class Elkus had once again been washed overboard when a wave hit the raft, though whether he was able to save his camera and its precious film remains unknown. Finally, after having to sever its anchor cable after the ship's stern anchor became caught in the rocks near the shoreline, the LCI carrying the amphibious task force returned safely to Iwo Jima, arriving without incident at White Beach no. 2 at 2215 that night. The sole prisoner was taken to the POW cage, the only concrete result of the day's activities. There is no evidence that the Army's flag raising on Minami Iwo Jima was ever publicized, and no further mention of it is recorded in the regimental history. Another landing party was arranged to conduct a reconnaissance of Kita, a much smaller island a few miles north of Iwo Jima, on 30 May 1945, but the group returned without spotting the enemy or raising a flag (figure 2.9).<sup>29</sup>

## THE ARMY GARRISON FORCE

By 20 April, there were few Marines left on Iwo Jima, except for the 5,330 buried in the island's three division cemeteries. The rest had departed for various rest areas in the Pacific, where they would absorb replacements and prepare for the impending invasion of Japan, code-named Operation Downfall. The island was far from uninhabited, however. By that point, 31,000 soldiers, Navy Seabees, and Army Air Forces ground crews had nearly filled the island to capacity.<sup>30</sup> Roads had been built, the three airfields reinforced and lengthened, and scores of new buildings and warehouses were constructed, as well as post exchanges, theaters, and recreation facilities. Within weeks, the island was completely transformed into a forward staging base for the air campaign against Japan.<sup>31</sup>

The 147th Infantry remained for several months as the Army garrison force's only ground combat outfit. Its primary mission of defending the island from attack remained unchanged, while it continued eliminating any remaining Japanese. There were many other units that began to arrive on the island at the end of March 1945 as well, rapidly swelling the number of troops on the island. Most of these men were involved with supporting the Army Air Forces and its air operations against Japan.

Intended to serve as a ground combat force for the invasion of Japan, the regiment was given a reprieve when it learned of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by two atomic bombs dropped from B-29s operating out of Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands, still being guarded by the regiment's 1st Battalion. The 147th Infantry finally departed Iwo Jima on 8 September 1945, when it was assigned similar duties on Okinawa, Japan, declared secure by the end of June 1945, following a battle even



FIGURE 2.9

*Makeshift open-air company command post of Company F, 147th Infantry Regiment, Iwo Jima, 1945.*  
Official U.S. Army Signal Corps photo

bloodier than that of Iwo Jima. Two months of occupation duty on Okinawa followed, during which time the regiment continued to encounter Japanese holdouts. To its members' relief, the 147th Infantry was notified that it would be returning to the United States at the end of November. Finally, after serving in the Pacific theater for nearly four years, the last man of the regiment arrived home on 12 December 1945. By that point, only three men who had deployed with the original regiment from the United States in 1942 were still serving in its ranks.<sup>32</sup>

## HOME COMING

By 25 December 1945, the regiment had been inactivated at the U.S. Army's Vancouver Barracks, Washington State, and was reassigned once again as an element of the 37th Infantry Division, Ohio National Guard. Its remaining members were demobilized and returned to their civilian occupations. For the most part, the regiment's achievements during the Battle of Iwo Jima went unrecognized by the U.S. Army, though the Marine Corps' official history of the battle, *Western Pacific Operations*, briefly mentioned the 147th Infantry as participating in the mopping-up phase of the battle.<sup>33</sup> No of-

ficial histories mention that the regiment conducted its own flag-raising ceremony at Iwo Jima, and no photographs depicting the event are known to exist.

Though it served in obscurity in support of the Marine Corps for most of its existence during World War II, the 147th Infantry Regiment carried out its duties well and faithfully during the three and a half years it spent in the Pacific. It had earned the right to display the battle honors bestowed for participation in the “Air Offensive, Japan 1942–1945,” the U.S. Army’s designation of the island-hopping campaign in the western Pacific that included operations on Iwo Jima. Perhaps the most concise description of the regiment’s contribution to victory is best summed up by Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, who wrote:

*[The] members of the 147th Infantry Regiment, whose mission was the destruction of the Japanese forces remaining on Iwo Jima after organized resistance had ended, displayed consistent courage and combat ingenuity in dealing with an enemy determined upon a course of fanatical resistance. Despite conditions of terrain and emplacement favorable to the Japanese, morale remained at a high level and few casualties were sustained. . . . The military proficiency and devotion to duty constantly manifested by the regiment were in great measure responsible for the final security of a vital advance base.<sup>34</sup>*

No Marine or soldier could hope for a more succinct summation of their contributions toward the final victory than that.

## ENDNOTES

This chapter was based on a previously published article, see Douglas E. Nash Sr., “Army Boots on Volcanic Sands: The 147th Infantry Regiment at Iwo Jima,” *Army History*, no. 105 (Fall 2017): 6–19.

1. Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1994), 47.
2. The U.S. Army Air Forces represented the military aviation Service during and immediately following World War II. It was the successor of the Army Air Corps and predecessor of the U.S. Air Force.
3. 147th Infantry Regiment (1st Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry), Lineage and Honors Certificate, Department of the Army, Center of Military History, Washington, DC.
4. John Miller Jr., *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*, U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific, CMH Pub 5-3 (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1949), 322.
5. Tom McLeod, *Always Ready: The Story of the United States’ 147th Infantry Regiment* (Texarkana, TX: privately published, 1996), 134.
6. 147th Infantry Regiment, Quarterly Unit History Report, January–March 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC, 1.
7. 147th Infantry Regiment, Quarterly Unit History Report, 5.
8. 147th Infantry Regiment, Quarterly Unit History Report.
9. 147th Infantry Regiment, Quarterly Unit History Report.
10. 147th Infantry Regiment, Unit Monthly Combat Journal, 1–31 March 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC, 1.
11. 147th Infantry Regiment, Unit Monthly Combat Journal, 1.
12. The term *corkscrew and blowtorch* refers to an infantry tactic in which two teams attack a stronghold; the first team lays the demolitions and the second team sweeps in with flamethrowers.
13. Headquarters, U.S. Army Garrison Force, Letter of Instruction, Iwo Jima and Volcanic Islands, 26 March 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC.
14. V Amphibious Corps, G-3 Personnel Report No. 35, 26 March 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC.
15. 147th Infantry Regiment, Unit Monthly Combat Journal, 26 March 1945, 1640 hours, National Archives, Washington, DC, 7.
16. 147th Infantry Regiment, Quarterly Unit History Report, 7.
17. MajGen Graves B. Erskine, commander, 3d Marine Division, Commendation Letter, 11 April 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC.
18. Japanese for “second born,” the term *Nisei* refers to second-generation Japanese living in the United States. During the war, all citizens of Japanese ancestry living

- on the West Coast were forcibly evacuated from their homes and interred at inland detention centers.
19. McLeod, *Always Ready*, 165.
  20. 147th Infantry Regiment, Quarterly Unit History Report, April–June 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC, 3; and McLeod, *Always Ready*, 159.
  21. McLeod, *Always Ready*, 160.
  22. McLeod, *Always Ready*, 160.
  23. McLeod, *Always Ready*, 149; and George W. Garand and Truman R. Strobridge, *Western Pacific Operations: History of Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. IV (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, Historical Division, 1971), 711. The activity of the 147th Infantry at Iwo Jima also was mentioned in an earlier Marine Corps history of the battle, see LtCol Whitman S. Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1954), 193.
  24. Headquarters, 147th Infantry Regiment, After Action Report, Minami Expedition, Monthly Combat Journal, 5 May 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC, 1.
  25. The American infantry soldier began World War II with the “combat” meal known officially as Field Ration, Type C, or C-ration, which included three individually boxed meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
  26. Headquarters, 147th Infantry Regiment, After Action Report, Minami Expedition, 2.
  27. Headquarters, 147th Infantry Regiment, After Action Report, Minami Expedition, 4.
  28. Marianne Ingleby (granddaughter of PFC Bruce Elkus), emails to author, 24 and 31 January and 10 February 2017.
  29. Headquarters, 147th Infantry Regiment, After Action Report, Reconnaissance to Kita Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 30 May 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC.
  30. Garand and Strobridge, *Western Pacific Operations*, 712.
  31. *Forward staging base* is the correct World War II term. Forward operating base, or FOB, is a modern term used today in modern military parlance. Iwo was to support the staging of air and sea attacks on Japan; it was not an operating base for the attack on Japan as it had no “operating” forces of its own that could do that.
  32. McLeod, *Always Ready*, 169.
  33. Garand and Strobridge, *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*.
  34. LtGen Robert C. Richardson, commanding general, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, Commendation Letter, 15 August 1945, National Archives, Washington, DC.

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# TIME, LIFE, AND THE FLAG RAISINGS ON IWO JIMA

*by Melissa Renn, PhD*

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*Life magazine for me was like the American flag . . . We felt a great responsibility photographing for Life. . . . We had a responsibility to be honest.*

*~Alfred Eisenstaedt<sup>1</sup>*

*Things happen twice in America. Once when they happened and then a week later in Life.<sup>2</sup>*

On 23 February 1945, Associated Press (AP) photographer Joe Rosenthal took a photograph (figure 3.1). Entitled *Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima*, this image, of six Marines raising the second American flag on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War II, is not only one of the most celebrated and widely reproduced war photographs in history, but also one of the most controversial.<sup>3</sup> This chapter follows Rosenthal's photograph as it moved through the American press, from its first printing on the front page of the *New York Times* on 25 February 1945 to its publication in *Time* and *Life* magazines a month later on 26 March 1945, and explains why *Life* delayed publication of the image. Through a

close analysis of the responses of *Life* editor Daniel Longwell and *Time* and *Life* war correspondent Robert L. Sherrod to Rosenthal's photograph, this chapter shows how *Time* and *Life*'s coverage of the flag raisings differed from other publications at the time, as well as how the confusion surrounding this photograph began.<sup>4</sup>

## ASCENDING MOUNT SURIBACHI

The United States initiated routine strikes on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima on 15 June 1944. The assault continued until the morning of 19 February 1945, when 30,000 Marines landed on the beach.<sup>5</sup> The harsh terrain and volcanic ash made it difficult for Marines to find secure footing, and they faced extreme challenges when constructing defensive foxholes to protect themselves from enemy fire as they slowly advanced across the island. As Staff Sergeant David K. Dempsey, a Marine Corps combat correspondent noted in a report: "Terrain was the key to every phase of the battle for Iwo. You were struck at once by the resem-



FIGURE 3.1

*Joseph Rosenthal, Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, gelatin silver print, 23 February 1945.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Kevin and Lesley Lilly Family, Manfred Heiting Collection, 2002.2036. © Bridgeman Images. Photo by Joe Rosenthal, courtesy of Associated Press

blance of this island to the surface of the moon. Our bombs had cratered every acre with shell-holes [*sic*] 25 feet in diameter.”<sup>6</sup>

By the morning of 23 February, the Marines had isolated Mount Suribachi, but danger still lurked beneath their feet. Several surviving Marines recollected: “The Japanese were not on Iwo Jima, they were in it.”<sup>7</sup> Suffering many casualties along the way, Marines ascended the volcanic mountain. Upon reaching the summit, five Marines and one Navy Corpsman used a length of pipe they found among the wreckage and raised an American

flag on Suribachi at approximately 1020 that morning.<sup>8</sup> Marine Corps photographer Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery captured this first flag raising on film with his Rolleiflex camera. Those in command, immediately recognizing its potential inspirational power, decided to send Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon from Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marine Regiment, up the mountain with a new flag—twice the size of the original so that it could be seen from a distance—to replace the first.<sup>9</sup> Rosenthal arrived at the top as the Marines were attaching the second flag to a length of pipe.



FIGURE 3.2

*Verso of Rosenthal's Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, gelatin silver print, 23 February 1945.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Kevin and Lesley Lilly Family, Manfred Heiting Collection, 2002.2036. © Bridgeman Images. Photo by Joe Rosenthal, courtesy of Associated Press

When they raised the flag, Rosenthal took his now famous photograph.<sup>10</sup>

Rosenthal's film packs were then flown to Guam, where Staff Sergeant Werner H. Schmitz, 4th Marine Division, developed the negatives. After the Office of War Information approved the images, they were then sent via AP Wirephoto to the United States.<sup>11</sup> One print is now in the collection of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (figure 3.2). Anne Wilkes Tucker notes that it is "possibly the first print made from the negative of this historic photograph. . . . Schmitz made this print of the flag raising

and sent it to his wife in 1945, writing to her that this was the first print he made from the negative. The stamps on the back of the small print show that it was sent by mail and passed through military censors."<sup>12</sup>

According to Marine cinematographer Norman T. Hatch, who was also the photographic officer (Warrant Officer) in charge of the 5th Marine Division Photographic Section, Lowery's film was sent "out with the press boat that night, but he did not learn for about 10 days if his film had survived."<sup>13</sup> Lowery feared his film had been damaged, since just after he

photographed the first flag raising, he jumped to escape a grenade, damaging one of his cameras. Hatch also described how, after the film was processed and cleared by censors, “Rosenthal’s photo was sent by ‘wirephoto’ to the United States, and Lowery’s photos of the ascent and first flag raising were sent by air to the Division of Public Relations, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.”<sup>14</sup>

## THE PHOTOGRAPH IN PRINT

The first news account of a flag raising on Iwo Jima was an AP story printed in the *Boston Globe* on the same day as the flag raisings, on 23 February 1945.<sup>15</sup> Under the headline “Marines Take Mt. Suribachi: American Casualties on Iwo Mount to 5372,” the *Boston Globe* report read:

*Hard-fighting United States Marines, who have paid the Pacific’s highest price for 58 hours of battle with 5372 casualties at Iwo, wrested 546-foot Mt. Suribachi on the south tip of the island from the Japanese today. The United States flag was raised on the crater’s rim at 10:35 a.m. by the 28th Regiment, signalling [sic] the end of one phase of the five-day-old struggle.*<sup>16</sup>

The article continued with a thorough account of the battle and included a photograph taken on 19 February 1945 by Rosenthal, depicting Marines digging into Iwo Jima.<sup>17</sup> It is significant here that this report mentioned only one flag raising. Furthermore, while the article referenced the first flag raising, which actually happened at 1020, it did not state that it was the first of two that day.<sup>18</sup> While it is unclear whether it was known at the time this story was written that there were in fact two flag raisings, it seems very unlikely. As words traveled faster than images at the time, Rosenthal’s

photograph of the second flag raising, which happened around noon, would have still been in transmission, and incoming reports only referenced the initial flag raising that occurred earlier that morning.<sup>19</sup> This also may be why the papers used a 19 February photograph for the 23 February story.

Once the press did receive Rosenthal’s photograph, they realized its aesthetic power, as had those who processed it on Guam. On 25 February, the *New York Times* published the photograph on the front page of its Sunday edition, cropping and printing it vertically under the heading “Old Glory Goes Up Over Iwo” (figure 3.3).<sup>20</sup> The caption for the image stated: “Marines of the Fifth Division hoist the American flag atop Mount Suribachi,” and the body of the article reiterated: “The planting of the American flag two days ago marked a definite change in American fortunes on Iwo.”<sup>21</sup> The article and caption were likely based on the information that accompanied the photograph, as well as AP communiqués from 24 February.<sup>22</sup> The Pacific Fleet communiqué 273 that came from its advance headquarters on Guam on 23 February, and published in the *New York Times* on 24 February, read: “The Twenty-eighth Regiment of United States Marines was observed raising the United States flag on the summit of Mount Suribachi, on Iwo Jima (Island). At 10:35 A.M. today. (East Longitude date).”<sup>23</sup> Robert Sherrod’s cable sent to *Time* on the same day only referenced a single flag raising, the one that occurred in the morning, and did not mention the second flag raising or Rosenthal’s image. Sherrod reported that, “when the United States flag was raised over this highest point on the island some marines wept openly.”<sup>24</sup>

Due to the fact that the two flag raisings were not mentioned in the 24 February com-



FIGURE 3.3

“Old Glory Goes Up Over Iwo” from The New York Times, 25 February 1945.

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muniqué, or in other reports or cables prior to 25 February, and that Rosenthal’s photograph was sent via AP Wirephoto with a caption stating, “United States Marines of 28th Regiment, Fifth Division, hoist American Flag atop Suribachi,” it is certainly understandable that the American press thought Rosenthal’s photograph captured the first flag raising that had occurred the morning of 23 February.<sup>25</sup> As newspapers from coast to coast picked up the story and printed Rosenthal’s photograph, many replicated the caption. Thus, this early conflation of Rosenthal’s photograph of the second flag raising with the time of the first

flag raising started the confusion. At that moment, two separate events—each with different photographers, different flags, and, as we now know from recent findings, with different flag raisers—became associated with a single image.

Reproduced in papers and periodicals across the nation, Rosenthal’s picture was quickly appropriated for a range of purposes and used to boost morale in a country wearied by weekly war reports showing military setbacks and casualties in the Pacific. Yet, it is important to note that, despite its aesthetic power and seeming legibility, Rosenthal’s *Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi* is also a misleading image. Flag raisings generally symbolize victory, yet this event neither marked a specific victory nor seemed strategically important from a military standpoint.<sup>26</sup> In fact, the battle was still raging when Rosenthal took his photograph. Some of the men in the photograph would be killed shortly after in the fighting that continued at Iwo Jima for 31 more days, with thousands more casualties on both sides.<sup>27</sup> For the Marines and others who were on the island on 23 February, the first flag raising that morning—the one documented by Staff Sergeant Louis Lowery—was most meaningful. As Robert Sherrod recalled in his 1945 book on the war in the Pacific:

*As we approached the beach about 11 o’clock somebody yelled, “Look, they’ve got the flag up on Mount Suribachi!” It was a dramatic moment. It seemed that we could do anything if we could capture that vertical monstrosity at the south end of Iwo. Tears welled in the eyes of several Marines as they watched the little flag fluttering in the breeze.<sup>28</sup>*

## LIFE ON IWO JIMA

Rosenthal’s photograph of the second flag raising on Mount Suribachi was not printed in ev-

ery newspaper or periodical, however. While one might assume that the popular American magazine *Life*—with its regular photographic coverage of the Second World War—would have published the image, it initially did not. In the 5 March 1945 issue, which *Life* devoted to the war in the Pacific, the magazine instead published an AP photograph Rosenthal had taken on 19 February of Marines crouching in makeshift foxholes and surrounded by ash and hundreds of casualties as they ascended the mountain.<sup>29</sup> On the following page of the article, *Life* printed two aerial photographs of the island of Iwo Jima: the first depicted 800 U.S. ships as they headed toward the shore, and the second showed smoke rolling across the island. The caption for the image on the lower half of the page read: “The smoke of fighting . . . rolls over Mt. Suribachi where at the end of the week marines raised the American flag. For the first day of the battle, during the first landings, the weather was good. The next two days it rained and blew, making landing of supplies very difficult.”<sup>30</sup> The article placed the flag raising in the context of the costs of the battle: “By week’s end, when the American flag had been raised over Mt. Suribachi, U.S. casualties had risen to 5,372.”<sup>31</sup> While the article acknowledged the flag raising, it is noteworthy that *Life* did not highlight the event or make it the headline story. *Life* followed this story on Iwo Jima with an eyewitness account from correspondent Robert Sherrod, which meticulously recounted the first three days of the invasion—but did not mention the flag raising at all—and focused instead on the dangerous ascent of Suribachi.<sup>32</sup> On the final page of Sherrod’s report, *Life* reproduced a U.S. Navy photograph showing the harsh terrain and hundreds of casualties.

*Life* did not publish Rosenthal’s photograph the following week either. Instead, in the

12 March 1945 issue, the editors printed *Life* staff photographer W. Eugene Smith’s photographs of the Marines’ military advance on Iwo Jima.<sup>33</sup> The photographs showed Marines crawling up embankments, advancing across gritty earth and eruptions, and struggling to maneuver amphibious tractors across the inhospitable environment.

*Life* delayed publication of Rosenthal’s photograph until 26 March 1945, a full month after it had been reproduced in newspapers nationwide. A letter from *Life* editor Daniel Longwell to *Time*’s managing editor Roy Alexander explained why *Life* did not initially run the photograph. Longwell wrote:

*LIFE as you may know, never joined in the acclaim for Joe Rosenthal’s A.P. picture of raising the flag on Mt. Suribachi. We didn’t run it the week it came in, I believe. . . . I recognized the picture filled a great need emotionally, but I was emotionally upset too. [W. Eugene] Smith had turned in almost foolhardy risk taking pictures . . . at Iwo . . . [and later, in Okinawa]. . . . Smith had his jaw shot away working on a casual assignment I had tossed off suggesting some photographer shoot a series on a day in the life of a soldier.<sup>34</sup> Sherrod was at Iwo and sent in a hell of a report which we published using some of Rosenthal’s A.P. pictures, which were good but not as risky as Smith’s. Sherrod’s accounts were grim, as that battle seems to have been in everyone’s recollection. Suddenly I was confronted with the flag-raising picture. My first thought was what a damned fool thing to do—they shouldn’t set that example to the other troops. This isn’t the Civil War in movies, the machine gun has been invented. I said that’s a posed picture, something I had been fighting against all through the combat, particularly with the A.P. . . . I cabled Sher-*

rod and in his answer he told of Rosenthal's complaint that this stunt had been set up for [Staff] Sgt. [Louis] Lowery, a Marine Corps photographer for Leatherneck. Rosenthal complained, got a bigger flag and another squad and went up to get the famous picture.<sup>35</sup>

Rosenthal's photograph clearly hit a nerve with the *Life* editorial staff. It is not surprising that Longwell—a *Life* editor well versed in wartime imagery—viewed Rosenthal's photograph with suspicion, as it does not look at all like a typical war photograph.<sup>36</sup> Rosenthal's pyramidal, even sculptural, composition of six strong, heroic men raising Old Glory against a still, clear sky starkly contrasts with the horror and chaos characteristic of most documentary war photographs, such as George Strock's *Dead GIs on Buna Beach, New Guinea* (1943), which shows slain soldiers strewn haphazardly across the shoreline with a landing craft half-sunk in the sea.<sup>37</sup> Most war photographs—especially such notable ones as Roger Fenton's *Valley of the Shadow of Death* (1855), Timothy H. O'Sullivan and Alexander Gardner's U.S. Civil War photographs of dead soldiers, and Robert Capa's photograph of a falling loyalist soldier during the Spanish Civil War—have generally depicted death and destruction. While these photographs have undergone scrutiny as to their authenticity (albeit for different reasons), their immediacy and informality (even if staged) initially seems more real to the eye than the serendipitous formality and classical composition of Rosenthal's *Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi*.

Naturally, *Life's* editors greeted Rosenthal's image with great skepticism. How was it possible, during the midst of one of the most difficult campaigns in Asia, for him to snap such a perfect picture? Indeed, it was always a challenge for film and, for that matter, pho-

tographers to survive battles unscathed.<sup>38</sup> *Life's* editors were accustomed to receiving damaged rolls of film and imperfect photographs shot quickly under difficult conditions. Rosenthal acknowledged his good fortune: "I was lucky to catch the flag-raising at its most dramatic instant, producing a masterpiece." He even inscribed a signed copy of the photograph to Staff Sergeant Lowery with the message, "To Lou Lowery, who got there first,—a helluva Marine and a great guy, all the best from lucky Joe Rosenthal."<sup>39</sup>

Rosenthal unintentionally created a classically composed image, one that is also remarkably clear and void of distracting elements, such as stray bullets, splintered trees, smoke clouds, or substantial wreckage. There are no tanks, planes, battleships, or other usual signifiers of modern warfare. Furthermore, Rosenthal's photograph contradicts Robert Capa's oft-quoted maxim: "If you want to get good action shots, they mustn't be in true focus. If your hand trembles a little, then you get a fine action shot."<sup>40</sup>

There is no blur in Rosenthal's flag-raising photograph, no evidence of a trembling hand. There is no blood, no death, and no violence. Unlike Lowery's photograph of the first flag raising—which has in its foreground, a crouching Marine on guard looking out while the others raise the first flag—there is no sense of danger or imminent threat in Rosenthal's image. In Rosenthal's photograph, the action seems distant and safe. As Longwell observed, Rosenthal's photograph does not register as risky; it lacks the horror typical of wartime images taken by his peers, such as W. Eugene Smith's moving and graphic photographs of explosions, injured soldiers and Marines, and casualties from the battles at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.<sup>41</sup> To be sure, the challenging conditions



FIGURE 3.4

Clipping of J. Campbell Bruce, "The War's Greatest Picture," *True*, vol. 35, no. 213 (February 1955).

W. Eugene Smith Archive, AG33:16/9, Collection Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona

on Iwo Jima made it extraordinarily difficult to capture events on film. In fact, Smith was particularly disappointed by his own contact prints from Iwo Jima, despite the editors' enthusiasm for his pictures.<sup>42</sup> As he stated, "I find not one that I could stand to see in print—and yet much of what I needed was present on the island. . . . the pictures were there, I through my own incompetence failed."<sup>43</sup> Smith surely appreciated how lucky Rosenthal was to get that shot, and acknowledged the photograph's greatness.<sup>44</sup> In Smith's archive at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, there is a folder of his clippings about the flag raisings

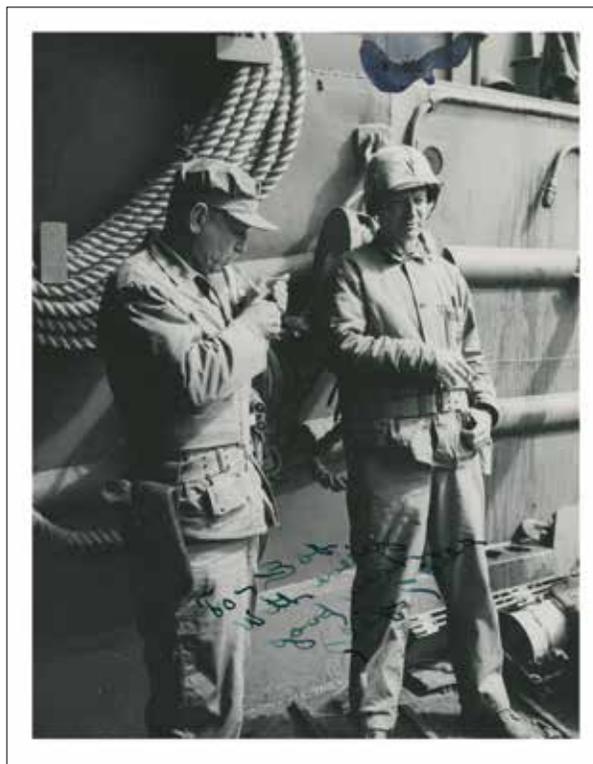


FIGURE 3.5

MajGen Clifton B. Cates on LSM with Robert Sherrod of *Time* as they come ashore at Iwo Jima in 1945.

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, Robert Lee Sherrod Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries

at Iwo Jima, which includes a copy of J. Campbell Bruce's 1955 article, "The War's Greatest Picture," from *True* (figure 3.4).<sup>45</sup>

## FROM THE FIELD

*Life's* editors were not the only ones who had reservations about Rosenthal's photograph. *Time* and *Life* war correspondent Robert Sherrod also questioned the image and the attention it was getting in the press (figure 3.5).<sup>46</sup> In a 13 March 1945 cable to David Hulburd, the chief bureau head at *Time*, Sherrod wrote:

*This is the type of stuff that nobody should have to write because it will destroy some illusions. But since it will ultimately come out it might as well come out now instead*

*of waiting, as the heroic painting of Washington crossing the Delaware had to wait, to be disproved. . . . The heroic picture of the flag raised on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, used on the first page of TIME, March 5th issue, as well as in every other United States publication, it is assumed, is photographically great but historically it is slightly phony. (Understand here that stamps are being made from it and coins being struck off in its image.) The planting of the flag didn't quite happen that way, and the historic picture was a post facto rehearsal. The flag—a medium-sized flag—was actually planted atop Mount Suribachi at 10:30 February 23rd. . . . Photographer Joe Rosenthal of Associated Press climbed the mountain that afternoon and took his excellent picture of a larger flag being raised. At the same time he also took a posed picture of a group of marines standing together around the flag waving their hands. . . . This should make a good feature layout for LIFE, showing Rosenthal's really great picture on one hand, then showing what really happened on the other. There was a photographer with the group that planted the original flag on Suribachi. . . . This original photographer . . . was Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery of Leatherneck Magazine and his pictures by now are in Washington where they can be obtained from Major [Walter W.] Hitesman. . . . Lowery made a sequence of fifty-six pictures of the original raising of the small flag. Leatherneck in Washington will not have them in sequence and will have no captions for them but you may be able to pick out eight or ten for a picture layout from these thirty-two captions which Lowery wrote and spread across the sequence.<sup>47</sup>*

Sherrod then listed the 32 captions that

Lowery had provided to accompany his photographs. Sherrod closed the cable with his personal take on the photograph, which is certainly understandable in light of what he had just experienced on Iwo Jima and before that as a correspondent reporting on Tarawa and other battles in the Pacific:<sup>48</sup>

*I believe this should be treated only as a footnote to history—and an illustration that the war is not a dashing, slashing business but generally a slow-moving, cautious, feeling-out of the enemy. . . . This should be no reflection on Photographer Rosenthal—he went up the mountain a few hours later when its gnarled caves were still dangerous with enemy sniper fire.<sup>49</sup>*

Sherrod sent another cable on the subject on 16 March, likely in response to Daniel Longwell's query about Rosenthal's photograph. Sherrod also outlined how *Life* could obtain copies of Lowery's photographs of the first flag raising:<sup>50</sup>

*Thanks for your cable regarding the flag-raising and congratulations to the keen-eyed LIFE editors. Despite the leathernecks' reluctance you can still get the original flag-raising pictures from the agencies. The Pacific edition of Yank for March 9th (published at Saipan) ran two of Lowery's tame pictures and Yank in New York undoubtedly has the same layout by now. One was a big slender picture about nine inches tall. The other showed marines lashing the flag to the piece of Jap pipe before raising it—this was in the center of three pictures in the left-hand column. Each of these pictures also has been printed elsewhere—the actual flag-raising... was printed in the Honolulu Star Bulletin on February 27, crediting the U.S.M.C. and Photographer Lowery. The Pittsburgh*

Sun Telegraph for March 2nd printed the lashing of the flag to a pipe and credited the U.S.M.C.<sup>51</sup>

Sherrod followed that cable with another on 17 March, clearly in an effort to put the whole issue to rest. The cable opened with a bold headline, likely in response to follow-up questions from the editors: “FINAL CLARIFICATION OF THE FLAG-RAISING.”

*I believe the second flag-raising was unquestionably genuine, though I cannot learn who set it up to replace the smaller one raised that morning, which was sent by Lieut. Colonel Chandler [W.] Johnson whose battalion took Suribachi. . . . My opinion is that the picture of the second raising was posed, but that depends on the definition of posed and whether anything that is genuine can be posed. . . . The point is made here that a flag-raising is not supposed to be a battle scene—it is a post-battle ceremony. . . . Rosenthal only did what any photographer would do: he set his picture for the best dramatic effect. . . . The marines all looked around to await the photographers’ signal before hoisting the flagpole.<sup>52</sup> After taking his memorable shot Rosenthal (and/or the movie cameramen who also got the same scene) posed the marines around the flag and snapped them waving helmets and rifles. . . . Rosenthal happened to get an historic picture of an unheroic moment and almost everyone who saw it misinterpreted it.<sup>53</sup>*

With all this information in hand, *Life*’s editors quickly put together a piece on the two flag raisings.

## “THE FAMOUS IWO FLAG RAISING”

*Life*’s editors clearly felt that they had an ob-

ligation to tell the story of the two flag raisings. Thus, in the 26 March 1945 issue, *Life* published a special report titled “The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising” (figure 3.6). On the opening page of the article, *Life* reproduced Rosenthal’s photograph alongside Emanuel Leutze’s painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851).<sup>54</sup> On the following page, *Life* printed Lowery’s photograph of the first flag raising. This was the first time that Lowery’s photograph was printed in a major American publication.<sup>55</sup> The text of the article provided the first thorough report on the two flag raisings. The article’s captions are equally illuminating. Below Rosenthal’s photograph the text read: “Marines raise flag atop Mt. Suribachi. This is the dramatic picture made by A.P. Photographer Rosenthal. It was second flag raised on peak, which was still under fire.”<sup>56</sup> Below the reproduction of Leutze’s painting, the caption noted: “‘Washington Crossing the Delaware’ bears similarity in composition to Mt. Suribachi photograph. A classic American painting, it was posed by models on the Rhine.”<sup>57</sup> The choice of words here is important. *Life* refers to Rosenthal’s image not as a photograph, but as a picture, the latter which implies something composed. Furthermore, *Life*’s editors did not treat Lowery’s the same way it framed Rosenthal’s. For Lowery’s photograph, the editors used the verb *photographed* to describe his action. The caption read: “First flag on Mt. Suribachi was photographed by S/Sgt [Staff Sergeant] Louis R. Lowery of *Leatherneck*. His camera was later smashed when he plunged downhill to escape a Jap grenade.”<sup>58</sup> *Life*’s editors were conscious of such distinctions. As Longwell emphatically stated: “May I put the place of art in *LIFE* as simply as I can . . . pictures and art are the same thing. Let us not get into aesthetics or semantics.”<sup>59</sup> The article also clarified the details

# LIFE'S REPORTS



Marines raise flag atop Mt. Suribachi. This is the dramatic picture made by A.P. Photographer Rosenthal. It was second flag raised on peak, which was still under fire.

## THE FAMOUS IWO FLAG-RAISING

A striking picture of U.S. marines raising the American flag atop Mt. Suribachi during the fighting for Iwo Jima (*above*) has become one of the most talked-about pictures of the war. Taken by Associated Press Photographer Joe Rosenthal, it arrived on the home front at the right psychological moment to symbolize the nation's emotional response to great deeds of war. Schoolboys wrote essays about it, newspapers played it for full pages and business firms had blow-ups placed in their show windows. There have been numerous suggestions that it be struck on coins and used as a model for city park statues. Editorialists have likened it to the painting of *Washington Crossing the Delaware*.

Years after the Washington painting had been established as a classic, it became generally known that the artist, Emanuel Leutze, had painted it from German models in a boat on the Rhine River.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



"Washington Crossing the Delaware" bears similarity in composition to Mt. Suribachi photograph. A classic American painting, it was posed by models on the Rhine.



First flag on Mt. Suribachi was photographed by S/Sgt. Louis R. Lowery of *Leatherneck*. His camera was later smashed when he plunged downhill to escape a Jap grenade.

### LIFE'S REPORTS (continued)

The story behind the Iwo flag-raising picture is equally interesting.

Actually the A.P. picture does not show the first flag-raising on Mt. Suribachi. The only pictures of that historic event were made by S/Sgt. Louis R. Lowery of *Leatherneck*, the Marines' magazine. The facts were told in the following dispatch sent to *Leatherneck* by a Marine correspondent:

"A four-man patrol of F Company, 28th Marines, made the first ascent of the volcano at 8 o'clock Friday, Feb. 23. They went almost to the top, looked over the volcano rim and went back to report they met no resistance. Then Lieut. Harold Schrier, executive officer of E Company, led a platoon to the top.

"This platoon took over the peak, meeting little resistance on the way up. At 10:30 these marines raised the first American flag over Iwo Jima, a ship's flag from an assault transport, brought ashore in a map case by Lieut. George Wells, 2nd Battalion Adjutant. A length of Jap pipe was the flagpole.

"With the platoon as it climbed Suribachi was S/Sgt. Louis R. Lowery, staff photographer for *Leatherneck*. No other photographer came up until after the flag was raised and Lowery got a clean scoop on pictures of the ceremony and the climb up the volcano. As the flag was put up a Jap hiding in a near-by cave hurled a grenade, then charged out waving his sword. Marine fire cut him down and he fell in a bloody heap down the inner slope of the crater, his sword broken. A second Jap hurled a grenade which landed at Lowery's feet and he dived down the steep side of the volcano, rolling 50 feet before he could stop. The grenade blast missed him but he wrenched his side and broke his camera in his tumble. His only other camera was smashed when he landed on the beach 30 minutes after H-hour."

Later that day, while the peak was still under enemy fire, Joe Rosenthal went up with another group of marines. Standing on rocks and a Jap sandbag at the edge of the volcano crater, he photographed them raising a second and larger flag. This picture, far more dramatic than Lowery's, was the one published throughout the U.S. and hailed by Secretary of the Navy Forrestal as "that unforgettable photograph."

War historians will also note that at other heights on the island the Lone Star flag of Texas and a Confederate flag were raised in pictorially unrecorded and spontaneous bursts of enthusiasm. These events all occurred before the formal flag-raising on March 14 when, with planes roaring overhead and gunfire still rumbling in the distance, Admiral Nimitz took over command as military governor of the island and its offshore rocks.

FIGURE 3.6

"The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising," *Life*, 26 March 1945, 17-18.

© 1945 Time, Inc., Joe Rosenthal photo, courtesy of the Associated Press

of the flag raising, explaining to the reader: “Actually the A.P. picture does not show the first flag-raising on Mt. Suribachi. The only pictures of that historic event were made by S/Sgt. Louis R. Lowery of *Leatherneck*, the Marines’ magazine.”<sup>60</sup> *Life*’s editors aimed not only to correct the record, but also to emphasize that they, like Sherrod, viewed the first flag raising as the one of historic significance.

In this article, *Life* presented Rosenthal’s photograph not as a document of war but as a moving, emotional picture that had much more in common with traditional history painting than with war reportage.<sup>61</sup> Like the many iconic history paintings in Western art that preceded it, Rosenthal’s photograph is a pyramidal figural composition with a flag flying prominently at the center. *Life*’s choice of *Washington Crossing the Delaware* as the key comparative image in the article was not arbitrary. Leutze’s painting was, like Rosenthal’s, a work that, despite its inaccuracies, also inspired patriotic fervor and healed the nation during traumatic times. Indeed, as one critic wrote about Leutze’s painting in 1851: “This is a picture by the sight of which, in this weary and exhausted time, one can recover health and strength. . . . [It] has the power to work upon the hearts, and inflame the spirits of all that behold it.”<sup>62</sup>

By reproducing Rosenthal’s photograph alongside Leutze’s famed history painting, *Life*’s editors intended to highlight that it was an image of a second event and not the initial or only flag raising that day on the island, as many believed at the time. Ironically, by associating the photograph with an iconic painting, *Life* inadvertently elevated the photograph to the same level. In the end, what seems to have remained in popular memory was neither the correct account of two flag raisings as described in the

text nor the enlightening captions but the juxtaposition of two patriotic images of American victory in battle.

*Time* magazine published a piece on the two flag raisings in the 26 March 1945 issue. *Time* also characterized Rosenthal’s photograph as a picture, as seen in the report’s title, “Story of a Picture.” The *Time* article likewise made comparisons between Rosenthal’s picture and canonical works of art, and while *Time* did not reproduce Lowery’s photographs, it did directly comment on the two flag raisings in a parenthetical prominently placed near the end of the piece: “(Neither of these flag raisings was official: last week, when Admiral [Chester W.] Nimitz formally took possession of the island, the U.S. flag was run up near the base of Suribachi with traditional ceremony.)”<sup>63</sup> Below the reproduction of Rosenthal’s photograph, the caption read, clearly in an effort to dispel further confusion: “Second Flag Raising/Nimitz arranged a third.”<sup>64</sup> Figure 3.7 is a documentary photograph by Private First Class R. R. Dodds of the flag raising arranged by Nimitz that the *Time* article referenced. (This photograph was not published in the *Time* 26 March article.)

*Life* and *Time*’s detailed accounts of the two flag raisings exemplify the challenges of changing the public perception of an image. In just a month, Rosenthal’s photograph had already acquired mythical status, and no amount of factual information—even an exposé in *Life* and an article in *Time*—could change it.<sup>65</sup> In 1945, Americans needed and wanted a picture of victory, and they got it from Rosenthal.<sup>66</sup> His photograph—unlike nearly every other photograph taken on the island at that time—did not depict the heavy losses and difficult conditions Marines faced on Mount Suribachi, but rather

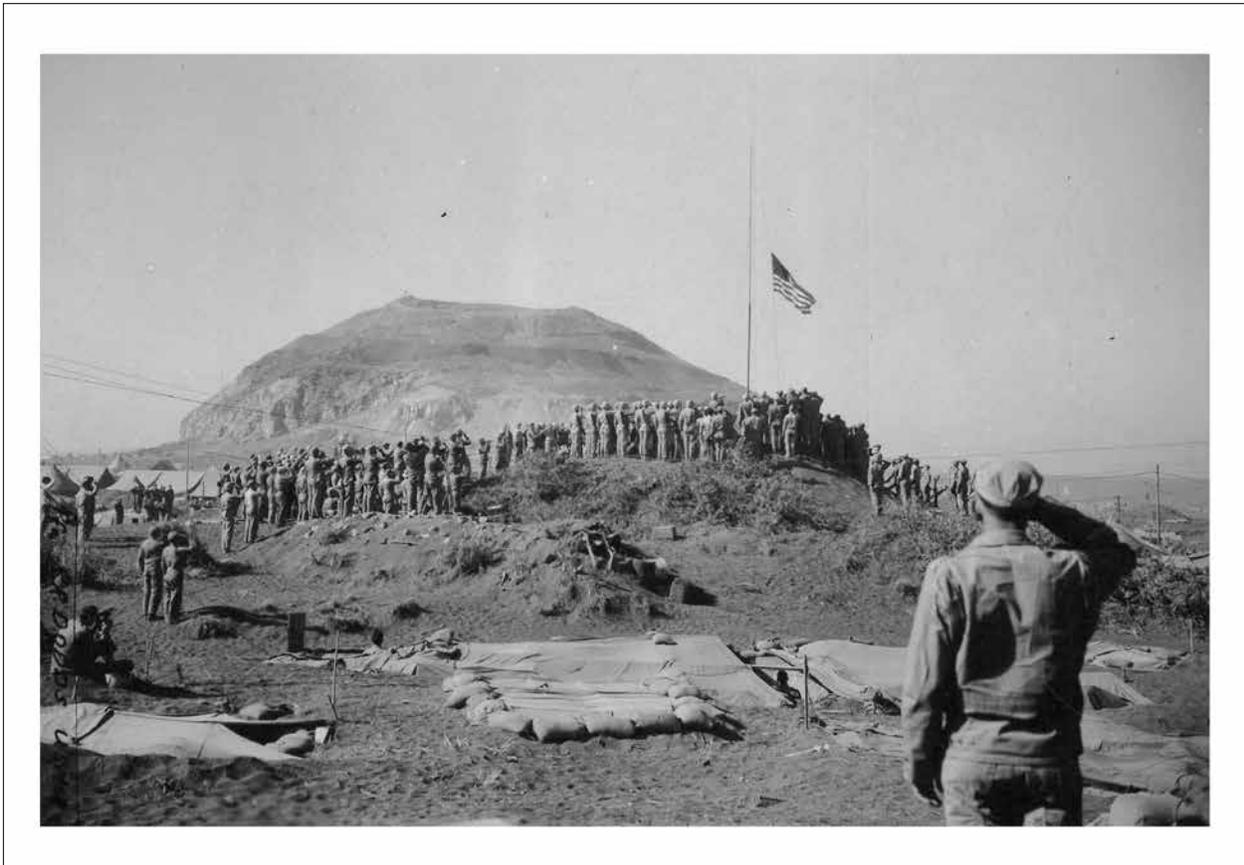


FIGURE 3.7

*After 24 days of bitter fighting, military notables gathered for the official flag raising on Iwo Jima on the morning of 14 March 1945. Prior to the ceremony, Marine Col David A. Stafford of Spokane, WA, read Fleet Adm Chester W. Nimitz's proclamation ending Japanese rule over the island. The battle continued for another 12 days, drawing to an official close on 26 March 1945.*

Official Marine Corps photo 114123, courtesy of PFC R. R. Dodds, National Archives and Records Administration

represented inevitable triumph. Far more than a war photograph, it now served as a symbol of American victory, transcending the battle itself as well as the circumstances of its production. No longer just a document of the war in the Pacific, it became an American picture.<sup>67</sup>

## WORDS AND PICTURES

By the time *Life* and *Time* told the story of the two flag raisings, Rosenthal's photograph had done its cultural work, and was already an icon. By summer 1945, Rosenthal's photograph had been printed on a stamp, refashioned into re-

cruiting signs and war bond posters, translated into sculpture, and had won the Pulitzer Prize (figure 3.8).<sup>68</sup> Rosenthal's photograph eclipsed Lowery's because of its formal qualities and wide circulation, and also because the text and captions that framed its first publication in the press, led to the incorrect linking of Rosenthal's image to the first flag raising on the morning of 23 February 1945.

While it is often said that iconic photographs (or photographs that become icons) require no words, the editors at *Time* and *Life* knew—perhaps better than anyone else at the

time—that pictures needed words.<sup>69</sup> To be sure, there may never have been an image that required a caption—a precise caption—more than Rosenthal’s photograph of the second flag raising on Iwo Jima. Just imagine if the caption below the photograph in that very first printing in newspapers across the country had stated, “Marines of the Fifth Division hoist the *second* American flag atop Mount Suribachi” instead of “Marines of the Fifth Division hoist the American flag atop Mount Suribachi.” It is arguable that Rosenthal’s photograph, given its powerful aesthetic composition, could have still served the same emotional need during the war.

As both *Time* and *Life* experienced in 1945, it is nearly impossible to shift the meaning of an image once it is fixed, especially if that image has become an icon.<sup>70</sup> While Rosenthal’s photograph initially seemed to be a straightforward representation of a flag raising, including to those who first published it, clearly that was not the case. As the editors of *Life* certainly understood, pictures required well-written captions. As editor-in-chief Henry Robinson Luce instructed his staff:

*Re Captions. The only mystery attaching to caption-writing is that captions should be excellent. A caption on a picture of a scene should first be sufficiently informative so that the reader is not left irritatingly mystified as to what the picture is supposed to show. . . . No caption should be a flat statement of the point of the story.*<sup>71</sup>

Unfortunately, *Life* and *Time*’s captions (and stories) came too late, and the meaning of Rosenthal’s picture was set by the brief caption that initially accompanied it upon its first publication. However, as the 26 March 1945 articles by *Time* and *Life* demonstrate, the de-



FIGURE 3.8

In 1945, the Marine Corps adopted the Iwo Jima flag raising as the central image for one of its “Enlist Now” recruiting posters. Sgt Tom Lovell, a commercial illustrator working for *Leatherneck* magazine, recreated Rosenthal’s famous image in paint for the design. Displayed alongside Lovell’s vivid rendering are unit patches for the 3d, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions and a caption that reads: “IWO JIMA. Here Marine courage and skill were put to the supreme test. In 26 days [sic] of relentless assault beginning February 19, 1945, the gallant Third, Fourth, and Fifth Marine Division crushed fierce enemy resistance and captured this vital base along the last miles to Japan.” By framing the scene with military language and symbols, the Marine Corps reminded viewers of its role in making the popular image possible.

Sgt Tom Lovell, USMCR, “Enlist Now: Iwo Jima,” 1945. Official U.S. Marine Corps recruiting poster, Art Collection, National Museum of the Marine Corps, 2004.20.165

tails are essential to understanding Rosenthal’s image. Knowing the full story of the two flag raisings does not diminish the significance of his lucky shot on Iwo Jima; it illuminates the photograph’s singularity.

## ENDNOTES

This chapter expands on an essay the author published in *History of Photography* (2015). It has been revised to incorporate recent findings and new archival research. See Melissa Renn, “‘The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising’: Iwo Jima Revisited,” *History of Photography* 39, no. 3 (August 2015): 253–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2014.995957>. Thank you to Breanne Robertson for the opportunity to publish this chapter and for her help with the research, and to Angela Anderson, Alexandra Kindell, and Charles P. Niemeyer for their edits and comments on earlier versions of this essay. Thanks also extended to Tara Craig, Jonathan Dentler, James Ginther, LtCol Matthew W. Morgan (Ret), Will Michels, Annie Trizna, Leslie Squyres, Emily Una Weirich, and Nicole Westerdahl for their help with the research for this chapter.

1. Alfred Eisenstaedt, as quoted in John Loengard, *Life Photographers: What They Saw* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1998), 20.
2. *LIFE: 50 Years*, 15 November 1986, as quoted in Susan D. Moeller, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 216.
3. A detailed account of the 2016 and 2019 investigations into the identity of the Iwo Jima flag raisers may be found in Mary Reinwald and Keil Gentry’s chapters in this volume.
4. Daniel Longwell joined Time Inc. in 1934 and was one of founding editors of *Life*. Robert Sherrod became part of the staff at *Time* in 1935, and was appointed war correspondent assigned to the commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean areas from May 1943 to September 1945. See C. W. Nimitz to Robert Sherrod, 28 September 1945, Folder: Incoming Correspondence, Nimitz, Admiral C. W., Box 7, Robert Lee Sherrod Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries, hereafter Sherrod Papers.
5. For a more detailed overview of the Battle of Iwo Jima, see Col Joseph H. Alexander, *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, 1994); and Charles P. Neimeyer’s chapter in this volume.
6. David Dempsey, eyewitness report #658, AG33:16/4, W. Eugene Smith Archive, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, hereafter Smith Archive.
7. As quoted in Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), “Across the Reef: Amphibious Warfare in the Pacific,” in *The Pacific War Companion: From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima*, ed. Daniel Marston (London: Osprey, 2005), 201.
8. As confirmed by the findings of the Huly Panel, the servicemembers involved in the first flag-raising event included 1stLt Harold G. Schrier, PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas Jr., Sgt Henry O. Hansen, Cpl Charles W. Lindberg, PhM2c John H. Bradley, and Pvt Philip L. Ward. See “Marine Corps Updates Its Official Records of First Flag Raising over Iwo Jima,” press release, U.S. Marine Corps, 24 August 2016.
9. The historical record is unclear whether PFC Rene A. Gagnon, who in addition to the larger flag carried fresh radio batteries for 1stLt Schrier’s patrol, met Sgt Strank’s four-man wire-laying patrol en route to the

summit or whether all five men departed the battalion command post together; however, Capt Dave E. Severance recalls that PFC Gagnon joined Sgt Strank’s detail prior to setting out. See MajGen Fred Haynes, USMC (Ret) and James A. Warren, *The Lions of Iwo Jima: The Story of Combat Team 28 and the Bloodiest Battle in Marine Corps History* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008), 129.

10. He also took 17 other shots with his camera that day: “Rosenthal took sixty-five photographs on Iwo (eighteen of them on February 23).” Peter Maslowski, *Armed with Cameras: The American Military Photographers of World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 233. The second flag raising was captured on film by Pvt Robert R. Campbell and by Sgt William H. Genauat, the latter a Marine motion-picture photographer. See Criss Austin’s essay in this volume for more on the film.
11. The Associated Press began its Wirephoto service in 1935. During World War II, the U.S. Still Photographic Pool (also referred to as the Wartime Still Picture Pool) consisted of three major picture agencies and *Life* magazine. As Robert W. Desmond describes, “Special provisions were made for news photographers and newsreel cameramen whereby their photos of films were available to all in a pooling arrangement. International News Photos, AP News Photos, Acme Newspictures, and *Life* magazine entered into this agreement in February 1942, and it was extended to include all other services.” Robert W. Desmond, *Tides of War: World News Reporting 1931–1945* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1984), 238.
12. Anne Wilkes Tucker and Will Michels, with Natalie Zelt, *War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and Its Aftermath* (Houston and New Haven: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Yale University Press, 2012), 260. A special thanks to Will Michels for bringing this print and its verso to the author’s attention.
13. Norm Hatch, “Two Flags,” *Leatherneck*, February 1995, 25.
14. Hatch, “Two Flags.”
15. This was possible due to the time difference between Guam and the United States. Cables were able to reach the AP the same day, often in time to be printed in the evening editions of newspapers.
16. “Marines Take Mt. Suribachi: American Casualties on Iwo Mount to 5372,” *Boston Globe*, 23 February 1945, 1.
17. The 23 February 1945 issue of *The [Portland] Oregonian* also printed the same photograph and published the AP story under a slightly different headline: “Marine Iwo Casualties 5372 in Worst Pacific Fight, Volcano Taken in Fifth Day, U.S. Ships Damaged.” The caption below the photograph as printed in *The Oregonian* reads: “After taking an ‘impregnable’ Jap pill box (center background), American marines dig in on Iwo Jima. Volcano islands. Note marine in center digging foxhole and bodies, some in open and some covered by sand, which caption did not identify. These are 4th division marines in action February 19.” The caption below the photograph as printed in the *Boston Globe* on 23 February 1945 did not give the date of 19 February for the photograph, and neither the *Boston Globe* nor

- The Oregonian* credited Rosenthal. It is a photograph by Rosenthal, however. The same photograph was later published in the 5 March 1945 issue of *Life* with Rosenthal's name printed in the credits.
18. Many sources disagree about the precise timing of the first flag-raising event; however, the after action report of Combat Team 28, 2d Battalion, provides an official timestamp of 1020.
  19. As Robert W. Desmond has noted: "Careful arrangements had been made for the transmission of news copy and photographs from Iwo Jima, and a new record for Pacific communications was established when photos of action there were in San Francisco within seventeen and one-half hours of the first assault." Desmond, *Tides of War*, 433. Rosenthal's photograph also traveled faster than Lowery's. Albee and Freeman discuss in detail the timing and release of both Rosenthal's and Lowery's photographs in their book. See Parker Bishop Albee Jr. and Keller Cushing Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi: Raising the Flags on Iwo Jima* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995).
  20. The photograph was published next to an article by Warren Moscow, "Japanese Overrun, Marines Smash Through Maze of Defenses in Bloody Iwo Battle," *New York Times*, 25 February 1945, 1.
  21. Moscow, "Japanese Overrun," 28.
  22. The information that accompanied Rosenthal's originally transmitted photograph of the second flag raising can be seen in a print that was at auction in 2015, which show the original AP caption that was attached to the image: "(FX9-Feb. 24) MARINES HOIST FLAG ATOP SURIBACHI—United States Marines of 28th Regiment, Fifth Division, hoist American Flag atop Suribachi, Iwo Jima volcano, after battling Japs to top of crater. Photo by AP photographer Joe Rosenthal on assignment with Wartime Still Picture Pool radioed by Navy from Guam to San Francisco today. (AP Wirephoto) (NRW71315jir/pl) 1945." According to the auction record, the code "FX9" indicates this was the ninth image received by the AP's San Francisco Bureau that day. See "Conflicts of the 20th Century: Lot 70," Bonhams.com, 21 October 2015.
  23. "The Texts of the Day's Communiques on the Fighting in the Various War Theatres," *New York Times*, 24 February 1945.
  24. Robert Sherrod to David Hulburd, 24 February 1945, cable 28, Folder Cables, Box 29, Sherrod Papers. It is also important to recognize that Sherrod only gave the subject of the flag raising one sentence in a two-page cable; his cables at that time focused much more on the battle.
  25. See "Conflicts of the 20th Century: Lot 70."
  26. Albee and Freeman observed: "Thanks to his photograph, the second flag raising on Suribachi became as symbolically significant to the American public as that episode was strategically insignificant to the course of the Iwo Jima campaign." Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, xiii.
  27. "Iwo Jima 'was the Marines' costliest battle ever. . . . The eight-square mile island cost the Americans—Marines, Navy, and Army—28,686 casualties, including 6,821 killed. It was the first time in the Central Pacific campaign that the enemy inflicted more casualties on an American invasion force than it sustained itself." Donald L. Miller, *D-Days in the Pacific* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 245.
  28. Robert Sherrod, *On to Westward: War in the Central Pacific* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945), 191–92. Significantly, this is Sherrod's only mention of a flag raising on Iwo Jima in the book. Sherrod also footnoted this section with the following comment: "This was not the flag whose raising was photographed and widely reprinted. That one was substituted for the original (and photographed) later in the day." Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 191. Later in that same entry for 23 February, Sherrod wrote: "Colonel Johnson's Second Battalion had scaled Suribachi and planted the flags there." Sherrod's precision here, specifically his use of the plural "flags," is important and underscored that there were two flag raisings. Sherrod, *On to Westward*, 194.
  29. *Time*, unlike its sister publication, *Life*, did publish Rosenthal's photograph in their 5 March 1945 issue, with the date of the flag raising incorrect in the caption. Below Rosenthal's photograph, the caption read: "Old Glory on Mt. Suribachi, Feb. 24, [sic] 1945/To rank with Valley Forge, Gettysburg and Tarawa." The text noted its aesthetic qualities, comparing it to sculpture: "Few in this generation would ever forget Iwo's shifting black sands, or the mind's images of charging marines, or the sculptured picture of Old Glory rising atop Mount Suribachi." See "Arms, Character, Courage," *Time*, 5 March 1945, 15.
  30. "Iwo Jima," *Life*, 5 March 1945, 38.
  31. "Iwo Jima," 37.
  32. Robert Sherrod, "The First Three Days," *Life*, 5 March 1945, 41–44.
  33. "Marines Win Bloody, Barren Sands of Iwo," *Life*, 12 March 1945, 34–37.
  34. After Iwo Jima, Smith covered the invasion of Okinawa for *Life*. Smith also described the events Longwell references here: "During thirteenth campaign on May 22, 1945, severely wounded by shell fire while accompanying foot-soldier during dangerous combat maneuvers to take photographs for story to be titled, '24 Hours with Infantryman Terry Moore.' Extensive field surgery required for multiple head, chest, and back injuries; evacuated to Guam." "Chronology," in *W. Eugene Smith: His Photographs and Notes* (New York: Aperture, 1969), n.p.
  35. Daniel Longwell to Roy Alexander, 9 March 1965, Box 57, Daniel Longwell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, hereafter Longwell Papers.
  36. Rosenthal's image also differs from many other war photographs in another respect—its lack of specific information about both the site and people in the image. In fact, it has been Lowery's photographs, Rosenthal's other images from Iwo Jima, and the still photographs and documentary films captured by SSgt Meyers Cornelius, Sgt William Genaust, Sgt Louis Burmeister, PFC George Burns, and Pvt Bob Campbell that have

- provided scholars and historians, including those on the Huly Panel and Bowers Board, with the details that helped confirm the identities of the flag raisers. While Rosenthal's is an incredible picture, the fact that the faces are obscured and the figures are seen from farther away, make it less useful as a historic document. Kelsey Follansbee has written about the anonymity in Rosenthal's photograph. See Kelsey Follansbee, "From War Photograph to a Museum for Forgetting: A Built Reproduction of Rosenthal's Iwo Jima Photograph" (undergraduate thesis, Middlebury College, 2017).
37. Many have commented on the sculptural quality of the photograph: "The figure planting the pole could be a Renaissance sculpture as the dynamic energies of the human form are concentrated in the exquisite muscularity of his body." See Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 96. *Life* published George Strock's photograph in an editorial. See "Three Americans," *Life*, 20 September 1943, 34–35.
  38. One of the best-known instances of damaged film during the war was that of Robert Capa's photographs of the landing at Normandy on 6 June 1944, which is recounted in Alex Kershaw, *Blood and Champagne: The Life and Times of Robert Capa* (New York: St. Martin's Press/Thomas Dunne Books, 2003), 116–32; and Richard Whelan, *Robert Capa: A Biography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 213–14. Capa, who survived both the Spanish Civil War and World War II, was killed by a land mine in Vietnam in 1954 while on assignment. Other World War II *Life* reporters suffered severe injuries or died while covering the war. For example, *Life*'s World War II artist-correspondent Edward Laning was injured in Italy and later awarded a Purple Heart, and Lucien Labaudt, another artist-correspondent, never even got to complete his first assignment for *Life*, dying shortly after his arrival in India. For more on *Life*'s artist-correspondents, see Melissa Renn, "From Life: Tom Lea and the World War II Art of *Life* Magazine," in Adair Margo and Melissa Renn, *Tom Lea, Life Magazine, and World War II* (El Paso: Tom Lea Institute, 2016); and Renn, "'An Enduring Record': Peter Hurd's Art for *Life* Magazine," in *Magical & Real: Henriette Wyeth and Peter Hurd, A Retrospective*, ed. Kirsten M. Jensen (Doylestown, PA: James A. Michener Art Museum, 2018).
  39. As quoted in Hal Buell, *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue: Iwo Jima and the Photograph that Captured America* (New York: Berkeley Publishing, 2006), 203. See also Robin Kelsey, "Of Fish, Birds, Cats, Mice, Spiders, Flies, Pigs, and Chimpanzees: How Chance Casts the Historic Action Photograph into Doubt," *History and Theory* 48 (December 2009): 59–76, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2009.00518.x>, which uses Rosenthal's photograph as a case study on the role of chance in the history of photojournalism.
  40. As quoted in Kershaw, *Blood and Champagne*, 43.
  41. Smith's photos from Iwo Jima were published in *Life* on 12 March 1945 and also on the cover and in a story titled "The Battlefield of Iwo" in the 9 April 1945 issue.
  42. *Life* senior editor Fillmore Calhoun cabled Smith about his Iwo photographs: "Your swellest Tokyo and Iwo Jima takes just arrive [*sic*]. Certain big play. Hicks, all *Life*'s editors say, tell you they're wonderful. That they think you just about without parallel as action war photographer. Take care of yourself." As quoted in Jim Hughes, *W. Eugene Smith: Shadow & Substance—The Life and Work of an American Photographer* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 153.
  43. As quoted in Hughes, *W. Eugene Smith*, 152.
  44. As Smith observed, "For something over twenty years two photographs of two different flags as taken by two different photographers at slightly different times on the same day, on the same mountain have been playing out a rather ridiculously uneven rivalry. One is a magnificent photograph and the other is not." Undated typescript with handwritten notes, AG33:16/10, Smith Archive.
  45. Clipping in AG33:16/9, Smith Archive.
  46. Sherrod was widely regarded for his work as a war correspondent. For instance, MajGen Clifton B. Cates of the U.S. Marine Corps wrote Sherrod complimenting him on his coverage of Iwo Jima: "I wish to express my personal thanks and that of the officers and men of the Fourth Marine Division for your excellent reporting on the Iwo Jima show." And Francis B. Sayre Jr., who served as chaplain for the U.S. Navy in 1944, wrote: "So it is to *TIME* that we look for the 'straight dope' when we get back to mail delivery again. The most popular correspondent with the boys is your Robert Sherrod. We like the way he calls a spade a spade. . . . Whereas we are gagged by Navy censorship and regulation, Sherrod is not, and he makes the most of it, with mature judgment. The boys like the way this same honest reporting is reflected in the editorial policies of '*LIFE*.'" MajGen Clifton B. Cates to Robert Sherrod, 11 April 1945, Folder, Incoming Correspondence-Cates, Clifton, Box 2, Sherrod Papers; and Francis B. Sayre Jr., Chaplain USNR, to Mr. Walter Belknap, 28 March 1944, Folder, Incoming Correspondence-Belknap, Walter K., Box 1, Sherrod Papers.
  47. Robert Sherrod to David Hulburd, 13 March 1945, unnumbered cable, Folder Cables, Box 29, Sherrod Papers.
  48. Sherrod published his account of the Battle of Tarawa in 1944. See Robert L. Sherrod, *Tarawa: The Story of a Battle* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944). For more on Sherrod's reporting in the Pacific, see Ray E. Boomhower, *Dispatches from the Pacific: The World War II Reporting of Robert L. Sherrod* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).
  49. Sherrod to Hulburd, 13 March 1945.
  50. There are varying accounts of how *Life* got Lowery's photographs. Hal Buell has written that "Lowery's photos were released by *Leatherneck* on March 20, transmitted on the AP network, and distributed in print form." See Buell, *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue*, 184. Albee and Freeman also discuss *Time* and *Life*'s coverage of

- the two flag raisings and *Life's* publication of Lowery's photograph in chapter six of *Shadow of Suribachi*.
51. Robert Sherrod to David Hulburd, 16 March 1945, Cable 43, Folder Cables, Box 29, Sherrod Papers.
  52. This sentence of Sherrod's report differs from other accounts of the event that day, which have stated that the raising of the flag was coordinated and that the signal was given by Schrier, not Rosenthal.
  53. Robert Sherrod to Eleanor Welch, 17 March 1945, Cable 45, Folder Cables, Box 29, Sherrod Papers.
  54. In a letter to Roy Alexander, Longwell stated that he was the one who decided to print Rosenthal's photograph alongside Leutze's painting. Longwell to Alexander, 9 March 1965, Longwell Papers.
  55. As John Moremon discovered, Lowery's photographs of the first flag raising were published in the *Evening Post* (Wellington, New Zealand) on 19 March 1945. See Moremon's chapter in this volume.
  56. "The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising," *Life*, 26 March 1945, 17.
  57. "The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising."
  58. "The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising," 18.
  59. Daniel Longwell to Andrew Heiskell, 15 October 1948, Box 28, Longwell Papers.
  60. "The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising," 18.
  61. The article also noted how the photograph had "arrived on the home front at the right psychological moment to symbolize the nation's emotional response to great deeds of war." "The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising," 17.
  62. As quoted in John K. Howat, "Washington Crossing the Delaware," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 26, no. 7 (March 1968): 299, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3258337>. Like Rosenthal's photograph, Leutze's painting also was considered lucky. As one reviewer wrote in 1897: "The value of a picture so famous and familiar as a national possession is of course not the same as its value as a work of art. [Johann Wolfgang von] Goethe's saying holds true that 'wonder-working pictures are generally poor paintings.' This is by far the luckiest of Leutze's compositions." "Washington Crossing the Delaware," *New York Times*, 22 January 1897. On the historical and political context of the painting, see Jochen Wierich, *Grand Themes: Emanuel Leutze, Washington Crossing the Delaware, and American History Painting* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012); and Barbara S. Groseclose, "'Washington Crossing the Delaware': The Political Context," *American Art Journal*, 7, no. 2 (November 1975): 70–78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1594000>.
  63. "Story of a Picture," *Time*, 26 March 1945, 60. W. Eugene Smith saved this clipping, along with other articles on Iwo Jima, see AG33:16/9, Smith Archive.
  64. "Story of a Picture," *Time*, 26 March 1945, 60.
  65. "By the time *Life* finally published Lou Lowery's photo of the first flag-raising, on March 26, few Americans seemed interested in the mundane truth anymore." See Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 97.
  66. "The fiction is taken for truth because the fiction is badly needed." See Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), 19. The Marine Corps did not publish Lowery's photographs or the story of the two flag raisings until 1947. See Vernon A. Langille, "Instrument of Surrender: Anniversary Review," *Leatherneck* 30, no. 9, September 1947, 9; and Bill Miller's story within that review, 10–14. See also Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, chapter 6, for more on the Marines' delay in publishing Lowery's photographs.
  67. As Hariman and Lucaites argue, the image "provides a coordinated visual transcription of three powerful discourses in American political history: egalitarianism, nationalism, and civic republicanism." See Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, 95.
  68. I can think of no other photograph, and especially no other war photograph, that has been reproduced so many times in forms other than its original medium. *Life* reported on some of these as well. In the 30 April 1945, issue, for instance, *Life* published a photograph of an oil painting based on Rosenthal's photograph that was being used in the war bond drive. The magazine also did a story on Felix de Weldon's sculpture. See "Tribute in Transit: Bronze of Iwo Marines Makes a Monumental Move to Capital," *Life*, 20 September 1954, 128–32. For other examples of how Rosenthal's photograph has been appropriated, see Tucker and Michels, *War/Photography*, 258–79; Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, 93–136; Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 195–242; and Martin Kemp, *Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 225–51.
  69. In fact, one of the most prominent studies of iconic photographs, including Rosenthal's photograph, is titled *No Caption Needed*. See Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*. For more on this topic, see Wilson Hicks, *Words and Pictures: An Introduction to Photojournalism* (New York: Harper, 1952). Hicks worked for the Associated Press from 1929 to 1937. In 1937, he became picture editor at *Life* and later became an executive editor for the magazine, a position he held until 1952.
  70. "The *Time* and *Life* editors had claimed to set the record straight, but the record seemed to defy correction. Subsequent publications, seemingly oblivious to the March 26 exposé and to Rosenthal's account, continued to tell the story of a single flag raising, a story that would gather momentum in the weeks, months, and years ahead." See Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 13.
  71. Henry R. Luce to staff, "Notes on Style," 10 October 1942, Folder, Incoming Correspondence, Time, Inc. 1931–1943, Box 8, Sherrod Papers.

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RAISING FLAGS, RAISING FUNDS

*Promoting the “Mighty Seventh” War Loan*

*by Austin Porter, PhD*

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Joe Rosenthal’s *Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima* is arguably one of the most recognizable war photographs ever created. It famously depicts six men raising a U.S. flag during the Marine-led assault on the island of Iwo Jima in February 1945. Visual details such as the fluttering flag, the angled pole, and the straining mass of bodies in the foreground combine to form a dramatic scene. While these elements helped make *Old Glory* iconic, the widespread distribution of Rosenthal’s image increased its popularity. During the final months of World War II, countless photographic reproductions appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country. Subsequently, posters, sculptures, and other media carried modified versions of the image that further amplified the photograph’s wartime renown.

In fact, *Old Glory* was presented in various forms so often in 1945 that the scene soon carried multiple overlapping meanings. This process, which started shortly after the photograph first appeared in national newspapers, included variations that did not necessarily prioritize the fighting at Iwo Jima. Although *Old Glory*

initially represented a memorable moment on Mount Suribachi, the photograph and its numerous adaptations connoted the bravery of Marines more broadly, the necessity of civilian sacrifice on the home front, and even paintings of previous American wars. Revisions of *Old Glory* appeared so often in mass media before the war ended that viewers arguably distanced the scene from the historical circumstances in which it was produced.<sup>1</sup> In short, the image evolved from a documentary record of the Pacific War to an icon infused with layers of symbolic value.

This process accelerated after government officials recognized the propagandistic value of Rosenthal’s photograph. A key example of this trend is seen in a war bond poster designed by C. C. Beall (figure 4.1). A commercial artist known primarily for his magazine illustrations, Beall translated *Old Glory* into a painting at the request of officials at the U.S. Treasury Department in spring 1945. More than purely patriotic propaganda, Beall’s graphic became the official poster for the Seventh War Loan campaign (14 May–30 June 1945). Known as the “Mighty



FIGURE 4.1

*C. C. Beall, Now . . . All Together, 1945, offset lithographic poster*  
U.S. Treasury Department, National Archives and Records Administration

Seventh,” this national, multimedia drive to increase war bond sales included the distribution of millions of Beall’s posters. Related efforts that featured variations of Rosenthal’s *Old Glory* appeared throughout the country in newsreels, temporary sculptures, and even staged recreations of the original flag raising. Businesses also used variations of *Old Glory* in advertisements that simultaneously promoted war bonds and corporate enterprise.

The translation of *Old Glory* from an Associated Press image into a poster gave Rosenthal’s photograph a mythical status rarely bestowed upon individual representations of the war. However, this process did not necessarily lessen the historic value of the photograph; instead, the numerous recreations of *Old Glory* encouraged viewers to associate the image with a broader series of meanings beyond the fighting at Mount Suribachi. Historians have previously addressed how Rosenthal’s photograph inspired countless recreations during the postwar era, including editorial cartoons, sculptures, and advertisements.<sup>2</sup> This chapter departs from earlier scholarship by emphasizing the distribution of *Old Glory* in the context of the Seventh War Loan campaign, specifically. By doing so, the following analysis demonstrates the effectiveness of Rosenthal’s photograph as a promotional device for the sale of war bonds while also reasserting the value of the image as an important historical record from the war’s final months.

## CAPTURING THE MOMENT

Understanding the relationship between *Old Glory* and the Seventh War Loan first requires a consideration of the photograph’s creation and initial distribution. In early 1945, Rosenthal was covering the Pacific War for the As-

sociated Press. On 23 February, after hearing rumors of a possible flag raising by U.S. Marines, Rosenthal, along with a film cameraman and another still photographer, hiked to the summit of Mount Suribachi. Shortly thereafter, Rosenthal captured the famous flag raising using his Graflex 4 x 5 Speed Graphic camera. The technical limits of photographing in the field prevented Rosenthal from seeing his work until days later, after his editor had selected *Old Glory* for distribution to stateside press outlets. Within days, Rosenthal’s image was celebrated in newspapers across the United States. Critics praised the photograph’s dramatic qualities, and it soon appeared in national magazines. Rosenthal received further accolades in early May when *Old Glory* won the Pulitzer Prize. This award was particularly meaningful as the committee normally only considered photographs produced during the preceding year as eligible for consideration.

The initial popularity of Rosenthal’s *Old Glory* resulted from a combination of the scene’s dramatic content and the historic circumstances surrounding its creation. The photograph depicts six Marines hoisting a pole topped by a billowing U.S. flag.<sup>3</sup> Though their faces are largely obscured, the anonymity of the men reinforces the necessity of group sacrifice during extreme conditions. Set against a stark sky, their collective action signifies an advancing front. As Rosenthal framed the men parallel to the viewer, the scene projects a particularly monumental quality that recalls classical relief sculpture. The resulting asymmetrical mass of bodies simultaneously provides a dynamic “snapshot” aesthetic that evokes a spontaneous moment. In addition to these visual details, the photograph’s warm stateside reception also benefited from a relative dearth of positive news from the Pacific War. In early 1945, U.S. forces faced an

entrenched Japanese enemy fighting with particular ferocity. As a result, progress through the Pacific was often characterized by intense battles across inhospitable terrain. *Old Glory* thus represented more than a powerful visual record of the hard-fought success of the Marines at Iwo Jima; it also served as a significant shot of confidence for civilians who needed affirmation of progress in the war against Japan.<sup>4</sup>

The photograph became so popular that the men involved achieved celebrity status. After government officials identified the servicemen shown, each Marine was pulled from active duty and shipped back to the United States. They were welcomed as heroes and later sent on tour to promote the sale of war bonds.<sup>5</sup> By the end of February, the photograph was so admired that even Rosenthal's fame rose. A *Washington Post* editorialist wrote that Rosenthal's popularity "is at the stage where people point him out."<sup>6</sup> In early March, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal characterized Rosenthal as "gallant as the men" he photographed.<sup>7</sup> Rosenthal typically redirected this attention to the men portrayed in the photograph by noting that the scene "symbolizes their gallant action. That was the toughest fight they ever had."<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, the ferocity of the fighting at Iwo Jima was particularly intense. Military historians estimate that the Marines suffered 24,000 casualties before securing the island. Enemy knowledge of the island's irregular terrain, which included beaches full of volcanic ash, made initial advances exceedingly difficult. Representations of the fighting in news media on the home front often addressed these challenges bluntly. For example, in April, the *Saturday Evening Post* printed a large photograph of Marines crawling up a steep incline during the early stages of the assault on the island.

The photograph's perspective is particularly low, indicating the photographer shot from the ground while crawling up the beach alongside the Marines. The caption observes that these "vulnerable" Marines were "mauled by mortar fire" during their ascent, making their assault a "grim experience."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the initial coverage of the fighting at Iwo Jima in *Life* magazine did not include *Old Glory* and instead depicted unsettling photographs of the violent first few days of the invasion. Previous photographs of the fighting in the Pacific portrayed similarly unsettling imagery. For example, Frank Filan's photograph of the 1943 Marine invasion of Tawara Island, which won the 1944 Pulitzer Prize, depicts a battlefield strewn with mangled bodies, wrecked machines, and uprooted earth.<sup>10</sup> Representing the brutality of war more directly, these and other photographs likely contributed to the popularity of *Old Glory*, which portrays a more positive scene.

The heroic content of Rosenthal's photograph also allows viewers to overlook details of the fighting that included the ongoing battles at Iwo Jima. For example, *Old Glory* makes no clear reference to the enemy, and the men shown do not seem concerned with defending themselves. Many viewers likely assumed, therefore, that the entire island had been secured. In fact, the Marines did not secure the island until 26 March, a month after Rosenthal shot the photograph. Thus, while the image projects a victorious moment, U.S. forces continued to fight for control of the island. Similarly, the circumstances surrounding the production of Rosenthal's photograph were deemphasized. News reports largely ignored the many other photographs Rosenthal took atop Mount Suribachi and the fact that *Old Glory* depicts the second flag raising. Acknowledging these details would have potentially compromised the scene's im-

promptu and “authentic” character. Similarly, the dynamic quality of *Old Glory* soon led to charges that the photograph was somehow “posed” or “staged.” Rosenthal rebuffed these suspicions by providing numerous details of the photograph’s creation while also acknowledging his fortuitous circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Press coverage also broadened the meaning of *Old Glory* by associating the fighting at Iwo Jima with historic battles from previous American wars. In March, *Time* magazine compared the fight for Mount Suribachi to battles at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, and Tarawa while also praising Rosenthal’s “sculptured picture of Old Glory rising atop Mount Suribachi.”<sup>12</sup> Similar press reports further magnified the scene’s significance by comparing Rosenthal’s photograph to famous works of art. In March, *Life*, the nation’s premier picture magazine, juxtaposed Rosenthal’s photograph with Emanuel Leutze’s well-known oil painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851). Formally, both images depict men at war, hoisting a flag within scenes characterized by movement and heroic action. By comparing *Old Glory* with such a grand and imposing scene from the American Revolution, the editors at *Life* linked the fighting at Iwo Jima with a rich visual legacy rooted in patriotic symbols of war.<sup>13</sup> Other news outlets simply declared *Old Glory* to be a powerful work of art. The *Kansas City Plaindealer* argued that Rosenthal’s photograph “is great art in every sense of the word,” while the *Times-Union* in Rochester, New York, compared *Old Glory* to Leonardo da Vinci’s *Last Supper* (ca. 1498).<sup>14</sup> Viewers were thus encouraged to understand *Old Glory* as a symbol whose meaning was not necessarily limited to the war in the Pacific, but instead part of a longer tradition of visual heroism.<sup>15</sup>

This mythical resonance expanded fur-

ther in May when the Treasury Department released millions of bond posters dominated by Beall’s painted translation of Rosenthal’s photograph (see figure 4.1). Beall’s full-color image depicts six men, their faces obscured, raising the U.S. flag. The lower portion of the poster includes the Seventh War Loan’s official slogan: “Now . . . All Together.” A brief caption below the graphic reads simply: “U.S. Marines at Iwo Jima painted by CC Beall from an Associated Press photograph.” While Rosenthal’s name did not appear on the poster, many viewers would have undoubtedly recognized the source of the graphic. Not surprisingly, press reports emphasized this connection by noting that Beall completed the painting in five days and “copied the Joe Rosenthal photograph exactly.”<sup>16</sup>

Known primarily as an illustrator of books and magazines, Beall often displayed dramatic contrasts between light and shadow. Unlike Norman Rockwell, his more famous contemporary who also designed posters promoting war bonds, Beall rarely rendered sentimental or humorous content.<sup>17</sup> Instead, he typically painted theatrical, narrative-driven scenes characterized by an effective use of color. These traits may have been what encouraged Treasury Department officials to commission Beall to translate Rosenthal’s *Old Glory* into a painting for widespread reproduction.

The extensive distribution of both the *Now . . . All Together* poster and its photographic source enhanced the symbolic resonance of both images. Government officials initially sent more than two million copies of the poster across the country for display in a variety of public spaces. At the start of the Seventh War Loan campaign in May, news media informed readers that, “within the next few weeks, you are going to get to know the Beall painting . . .

at least as well as you know your own name.” According to *Collier’s* magazine, citizens should expect to see Beall’s poster at “the garage at the end of Main Street, the bowling alley, the grocery store and the local chapter of your lodge.”<sup>18</sup> Another million-and-a-half copies were sent specifically to retail stores, which framed the poster in custom display windows. Additional copies went to military barracks, schools, theaters, subways, railroad stations, banks, and businesses. That same month, the *Los Angeles Times* noted that the extensive distribution of Beall’s poster seemed to “blanket” the city.<sup>19</sup>

Beall’s *Now . . . All Together* poster is a unique example of war propaganda as it clearly depicts a painted version of a popular, symbolically rich photograph produced only weeks earlier. To articulate the significance of this translation process, the cultural distinctions between these different types of media requires a brief analysis. Scholars have long argued that the camera’s mechanical quality suggests an objective representation of actual events. Photographs, such as Rosenthal’s *Old Glory*, are therefore typically understood to denote truthful, accurate records. Conversely, viewers do not expect a painting to convey the same level of verisimilitude. Even when working from a photograph, as Beall freely admitted, a painter makes aesthetic decisions regarding color and design that contribute to a unique, hand-rendered form. Similarly, the artistic skill necessary to produce a painting has long held a higher cultural status over the supposedly simplistic process of photography. This bias is amplified further by the fact that, while a painting is a unique object, a photograph can be reproduced endlessly. A poster such as Beall’s *Now . . . All Together* that featured a painted image based on a photograph inhabited a unique status; as an image, Beall’s rendering demonstrates a unique

hand-painted quality that suggests a higher cultural value than a photograph. However, as an object, the poster is identical to millions of copies, each carrying the same visual content. The end result was a mass-distributed poster featuring an instantly recognizable, hand-painted image that aggrandized the significance of Rosenthal’s already iconic photograph.

In converting *Old Glory* to a painting suitable for distribution as a poster, Beall made subtle but critical alterations to his photographic source that enhanced the final graphic’s impact. Compared to Rosenthal’s photograph, Beall’s painting depicts a dramatically cropped and compressed scene that forced the flagpole to be raised at a higher, more dramatic angle. Beall also extended the size of the flag while rendering a dramatic background filled with dark blue, green, and yellow tones that suggested an almost spiritual setting. Beall’s inclusion of two small dark explosions in the sky on either side of the flag further amplifies the scene’s drama. Similarly, Beall pushed the men into a smaller, vertically orientated space that provides an increased level of detail and allows viewers to distinguish the figures from one another.<sup>20</sup> This specificity may have been what Rosenthal referred to when he commented that the poster seemed “a little overdrawn.”<sup>21</sup>

Beall’s translative process also benefited from recent changes to commercial art industry standards that allowed painters to openly rely upon photographs as source material. While illustrators had used photographs long before the war, most avoided acknowledging this practice, as viewers understood painting and photography to constitute distinct media. While painting represents a more unique, “artistic” form of representation, artists who used photographs as visual aids risked the corruption of their creative integrity. The bias against the supposed

degrading influences of the camera's mechanical eye did not subside until the early 1940s, when Norman Rockwell acknowledged his use of photographs as a visual reference. Before then, a painter who used photographs while developing artwork was, according to Rockwell's 1943 *New Yorker* profile, "looked down on in the better art circles."<sup>22</sup> Beall's bond poster benefited not only from its famous source, but also from changing industry standards that increasingly tolerated the use of photographs by illustrators in the development of painted media.

The *Now . . . All Together* graphic is even more unique as few posters produced during World War II feature painted imagery based on a famous photograph. The few posters that depict content appropriated from a photograph are characterized by far more intense, often violent subject matter. Between 1942 and 1943, the Office of War Information (OWI), the primary American propaganda agency, commissioned a handful of posters that featured paintings inspired by photographs of violent acts committed by the Axis enemy. For example, Japanese-American artist Yasuo Kuniyoshi created a series of posters that depict victims of Japanese torture. Similarly, the well-known painter Ben Shahn used photographs of Nazi atrocities for paintings intended for distribution as posters.<sup>23</sup> These and similar efforts conveyed the seriousness of the war by addressing the violence experienced by civilians abroad. Moreover, by relying on photographs to develop these scenes, the artists could claim a level of authenticity for both the paintings and the subsequent posters. Many of these graphics, though designed to inform citizens of the seriousness of the fighting, were considered unsettling and did not see widespread distribution. Moreover, unlike Beall's graphic, they did not rely upon iconic photographic source material.

While drawing from the visual characteristics of both painting and press photography, Beall's poster demonstrates a unique status that also clearly expressed a patriotic message ideally suited for the promotion of war bonds. Related press materials released by the Treasury Department encouraged viewers to understand Beall's poster within these specific parameters by praising the graphic as a major component of the Seventh War Loan promotions: "Not only is it a lasting tribute to those who gave their lives in the cause for which we fight, but it is a constant reminder of the many and bitter battles which lie ahead until Japan is decisively crushed."<sup>24</sup> Thus, government officials promoted Beall's design for its capacity to signify both the fighting at Iwo Jima and battles in the future. This message became particularly critical in the context of promoting the sale of bonds during the war's final months.

## FUNDING THE FIGHT

Generating the estimated \$350 billion required to fight World War II proved a politically difficult task for U.S. government officials. During the early 1940s, Congress substantially raised federal taxes across all income brackets in an effort to cover associated expenses. However, taxes alone were not enough to cover the costs incurred by the war. To generate additional revenue, the Treasury Department promoted and sold bonds through organized campaigns, referred to as war loan drives or simply bond drives. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. oversaw this program, which began before the United States entered the war and increased in importance until 1945. Each drive involved the enthusiastic participation of multiple government agencies and corporate advertisers who worked together to encourage civilians (and servicemen) to invest in bonds.

These efforts were overwhelmingly successful in generating revenue as Americans ultimately purchased more than \$185 billion in bonds.<sup>25</sup>

The increased reliance on the bond program resulted from a contentious debate about the most effective manner to finance the war. While government officials agreed that the war's cost presented a serious challenge, little consensus developed regarding how to generate the requisite economic resources. Numerous politicians, including members of President Franklin Roosevelt's cabinet, felt that bonds would not raise adequate revenue and that an increase in taxes represented the only viable answer. However, passing the necessary legislation proved politically difficult. For example, in 1943, Congress vetoed an expansion of taxes on annual incomes.<sup>26</sup> As the national debt skyrocketed to historic levels, war bonds proved an effective method to generate additional revenue outside of income tax increases. Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, who previously argued that higher taxes would be widely unpopular, contended that a volunteer system of contributions, based on bonds, would prove a more popular and effective strategy for financing the war. The resulting loan drives, which were overwhelmingly successful, demonstrated a significant psychological component by allowing bondholders to contribute to the war. The program had a democratic quality as well, as bonds were sold at various monetary levels but with fixed interest rates. As a result, purchasers could invest with confidence on their return at a rate that fit their budget. Consequently, the Treasury Department raised revenues while encouraging civilians to voluntarily contribute to the war.

The bond program generated impressive results beginning with the First War Loan, held in 1942, which led to \$13 billion in sales to

more than 50 million Americans, or more than 35 percent of the population.<sup>27</sup> Despite this success, Treasury officials quickly expressed concerns that buyers could lose interest in repeat purchases either out of a misunderstanding of the government's need for continued public financial support or, worse yet, an apathy toward the war effort. To keep bond promotions fresh and encourage repeat sales, officials established a series of separate, consecutive bond loans that featured unique campaign themes. The resulting eight themes attempted to reinvigorate the public and suppress complacent attitudes.

Each war loan featured a comprehensive promotional strategy developed across multiple media platforms, including advertising, film, radio, and printed graphics.<sup>28</sup> The messages and themes of specific bond drives received particularly effective visual support through the distribution of posters developed by committees that included independent artists, government officials, and advertising agencies. Although staff artists more often developed poster imagery, in some cases, Treasury officials offered an artist a contract to create a specific design. Poster committees comprising bureaucrats and artists generally authorized the final designs for distribution. In some instances, the process of evaluating graphics included Morgenthau's wife, who had a particular interest in posters.<sup>29</sup>

Prior to Beall's *Now . . . All Together* design, bond posters featured a variety of overlapping themes involving sentimental, militaristic, and patriotic imagery. From the program's beginning, representations of American soldiers—both past and present—were particularly common. In 1941, Treasury officials designated Daniel Chester French's famous sculpture *The Minute Man* (1874) as the official symbol of the war bond program.<sup>30</sup> Located in Concord, Massachusetts, near the historic site of the first

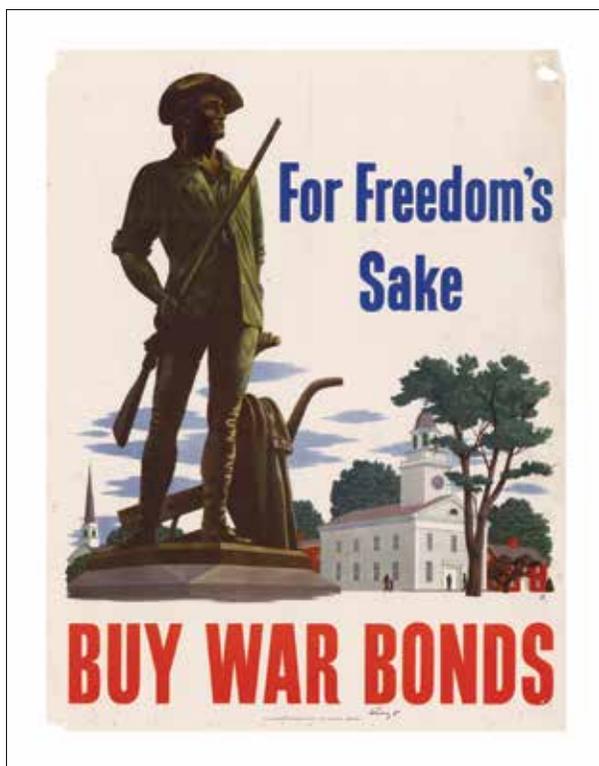


FIGURE 4.2  
*John Atherton, For Freedom's Sake, 1943,*  
*offset lithographic poster.*  
 U.S. Treasury Department, National Archives  
 and Records Administration

shot of the Revolutionary War, *The Minute Man* served as a powerful symbol of the spirit of the Colonial era.<sup>31</sup> This famous figure, shown striding boldly forward with a musket and leaving his plow behind, appeared in advertisements and posters throughout the war. For example, French's sculpture dominated a 1943 poster designed by John Atherton that featured the text "For Freedom's Sake . . . Buy War Bonds" (figure 4.2). Similar to Beall's appropriation of Rosenthal's photograph, Atherton's design relies on an existent image. However, Atherton's poster relates the current fight to broader, more historical themes by referencing the Revolutionary War. By juxtaposing this imagery with the phrase "For Freedom's Sake," Atherton amplified the effect further by suggesting that

the independence fought for during the Colonial era was currently threatened by the international crisis.

Bond posters featuring servicemen more often depicted contemporary weapons and battle dress in scenes that vacillated between promotions of American military might and more sober acknowledgments of the war's violence. Well-known illustrator N. C. Wyeth developed an example of the former type for a poster produced in 1942 (figure 4.3). This image portrays a massive, intimidating Uncle Sam directing an assault of American soldiers and aircraft against an unseen enemy. Layers of smoldering smoke surround the scowling Uncle Sam, who tightly clasps a large, swelling U.S. flag over his shoulder. Though the soldiers in the foreground wear an older style of helmet, the graphic clearly presents a message of contemporary military power. The scene's colorful, dynamic illustration requires no additional text than the caption that plainly encourages viewers to "buy war bonds." Similar to Beall's design, Wyeth's poster relies upon rich symbolism and a message of military might. However, Wyeth's painting avoids relying on a known photographic source, instead providing what might best be described as a scene from the enemy's nightmare.

As the war progressed, bond posters expanded their message to acknowledge the suffering experienced by U.S. soldiers abroad. For example, a poster designed by Robert Sloan in 1943 depicts a U.S. serviceman, his head bandaged, staring at the viewer uneasily before a darkened, desolate battlefield (figure 4.4). While the caption reminds viewers to purchase the bonds, the copy above plainly asks, "Doing all you can, brother?" Though the poster does not depict a flag, the combination of the moody, blue sky along with the prominent spot of blood

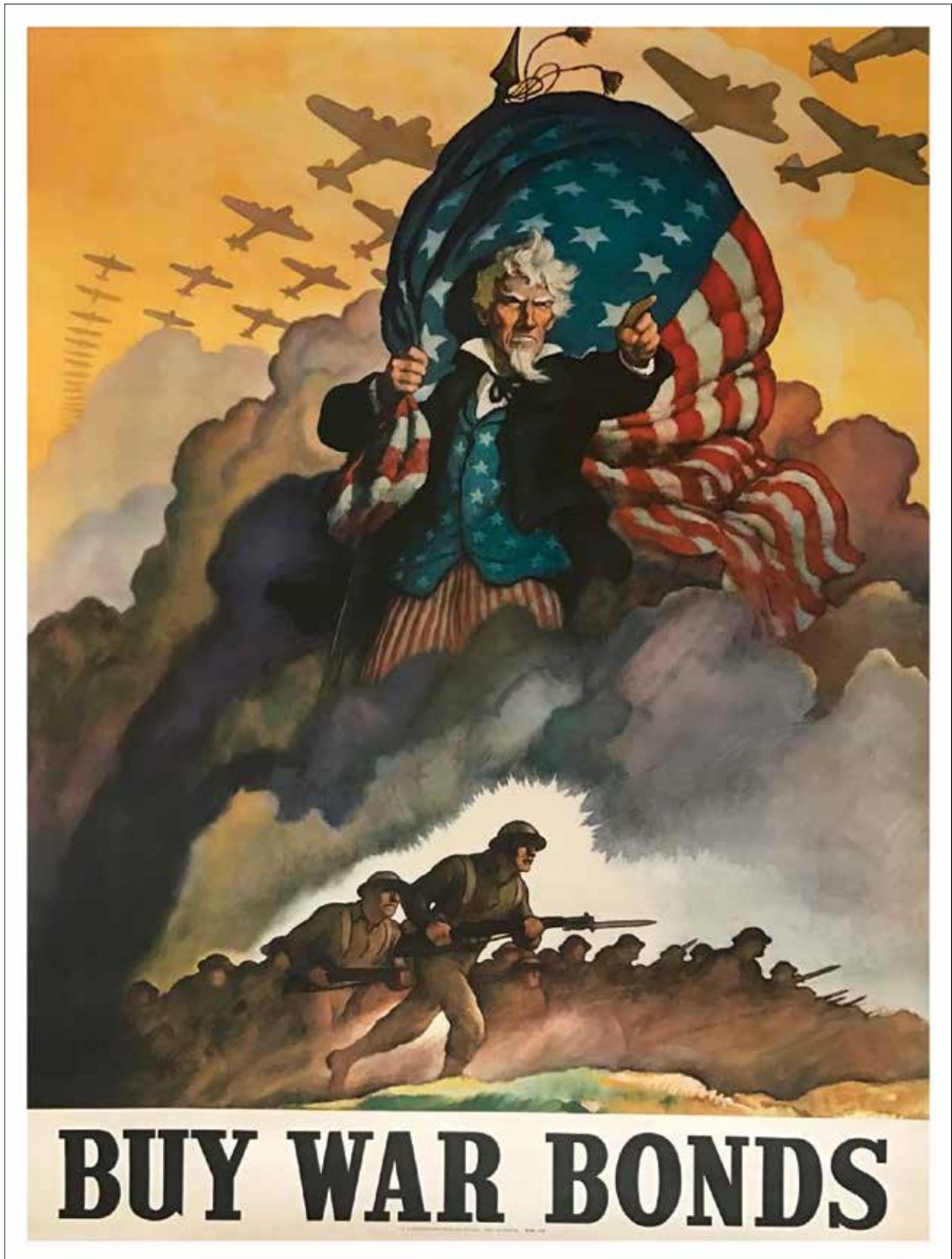


FIGURE 4.3

*N. C. Wyeth, Buy War Bonds, 1942, offset lithographic poster.*

U.S. Treasury Department, National Archives and Records Administration

AUSTIN PORTER



FIGURE 4.4  
*Robert Sloan, Doing All You Can, Brother?, 1943,*  
*offset lithographic poster.*  
 U.S. Treasury Department, National Archives and  
 Records Administration

on the white bandage worn by an apprehensive soldier provides a surrogate reminder of Old Glory. By acknowledging the pain soldiers experienced abroad, Sloan's poster reminded civilians of the hardships faced by others amidst the chaos of war. This message was significant as some civilians began complaining about wartime sacrifices shortly after the war started. For example, mandated rationing and shortages of consumer goods led to objections across the country.<sup>32</sup> Posters such as Sloan's reminded Americans that the ways in which they sacrificed at home, though crucial for the war effort, were incomparable to the experiences of servicemen and many civilians around the world.

As the war progressed and an Allied victory seemed increasingly likely, many bond post-



FIGURE 4.5  
*Vic Guinnell, To Have and to Hold, 1944,*  
*offset lithographic poster.*  
 U.S. Treasury Department, National Archives  
 and Records Administration

ers demonstrated a decreased awareness of the violence abroad. For example, a 1944 design by Vic Guinnell portrays a soldier stretching a U.S. flag across an indeterminate space while the accompanying text reads: "To Have and to Hold" (figure 4.5). Unlike Sloan's design, this image deemphasizes the violence of the battlefield for a more explicitly patriotic scene. Additionally, the text refers simultaneously to both the flag and to the viewer's bonds. This message was pertinent as government officials periodically expressed concerns that investors may request to cash their bonds before maturity. A similar message is seen in a poster from the same year featuring a smiling young boy

next to text encouraging parents to “Protect His Future.” This design included two overlapping messages. First, it refers to the immediate necessity of protecting the next generation from war, broadly speaking. Second, it alludes to the importance of providing future financial security through bonds.<sup>33</sup>

As the United States entered what would be the war’s final year, the previous six bond drives were regarded as overwhelmingly successful. However, federal bureaucrats continued to express concerns that potential buyers would feel indifferent about purchasing additional bonds as the war seemed close to a conclusion. As a result, many promotions for the Seventh War Loan featured dynamic, intense rhetoric.

## SELLING THE MIGHTY SEVENTH

At the start of the Seventh War Loan in spring 1945, Treasury officials faced a potentially problematic financial situation. As an Allied victory seemed increasingly likely, many government bureaucrats feared that a sense of inevitable victory would lead to a decrease in bond sales.<sup>34</sup> In response, Seventh War Loan promotions used the phrase “Now . . . All Together” to convince civilians that the war’s successful conclusion hinged on a united effort between the home front and the armed forces abroad. These efforts were supplemented by bond promotions that featured particularly dramatic rhetoric that often relied on notions of authenticity. The extensive use of Rosenthal’s iconic *Old Glory* in the Mighty Seventh bond campaign demonstrated an important example of this strategy. As a photograph, this image signified a high level of realism that was difficult to deny. Additionally, its instant familiarity made an ideal icon for reuse in temporary sculp-

tures, stamps, sheet music, newsreel footage, and staged recreations of the flag raising. The Mighty Seventh’s reliance on authenticity also extended to documentary films that viewers likely regarded as intense and possibly shocking.

The sense of unity expressed by Rosenthal’s *Old Glory* provided a particularly effective graphic to supplement the Seventh War Loan’s official slogan, “Now . . . All Together.” This phrase, which filled the lower section of Beall’s poster, demonstrates an important shift in the rhetoric used to encourage the purchase of war bonds. Conversely, these words clearly convey the combined effort of the Marines shown raising the flag. More important, however, the slogan alludes to the necessity of continued sacrifice from civilians on the home front—financial and otherwise—during the war’s final months. Many government officials feared that the Allied victory over the Axis Powers in Europe in May—which coincided closely with the start of the Mighty Seventh War Loan—would encourage civilians to develop a sense of inevitable victory and an inevitable decrease in bond sales. In fact, the war was far from over. The combination of the strategic complexities of fighting in the Pacific along with the enemy’s continued resolve presented numerous challenges and inevitably intense fighting. Moreover, American politicians and military officials expressed serious concerns with the financial and cultural challenges of rebuilding and stabilizing Europe. As a result, Treasury officials established the Seventh War Loan’s goal at \$14 billion, an amount similar to previous efforts.<sup>35</sup>

To promote continued home front participation in the bond program, Mighty Seventh promotions offered creative interpretations of the “Now . . . All Together” message that linked civilians to the war in surprising ways. This strategy often suggested that the contri-



FIGURE 4.6

*Phil Wyford, They Also Serve, Who Buy War Bonds, 1945, offset lithographic poster.*  
U.S. Treasury Department, National Archives and Records Administration

butions of citizens and servicemen were parallel, or even relatively equal, components in the war effort. For example, a Mighty Seventh bond drive poster designed by Phil Wyford prominently features a middle-age man proudly displaying war bonds (figure 4.6). His clean-cut, dapper dress clearly designates him as a white-collar professional. Behind him, a soldier stands in clouds of smoke while firing an M50 Reising submachine gun. The poster's lower caption reminds viewers of the Seventh War Loan, while the main text reads: "They also serve, who buy war bonds." This phrase, combined with the juxtaposition between these two men, explicitly aligns civilian bond purchasers with soldiers. Wyford's poster thus conveys the "Now . . . All Together" message expressed in Beall's design by linking the war abroad with the purchasing habits of civilians at home.

Countless other Mighty Seventh promotions reinforce a similar idea by making a much more direct reference to Rosenthal's photograph. In addition to Beall's poster, Treas-

ury officials commissioned Joseph Reichert, a commercial artist, to recreate Rosenthal's photograph into a more basic illustration (figure 4.7).<sup>36</sup> This logo-esque graphic translated the complicated forms seen in both Rosenthal's photograph and Beall's illustration into a basic icon that featured a streamlined scene with only three Marines. The graphic's most recognizable element is likely the man at the far right, shown planting the flagpole into the rocky earth. Instead of the four additional Marines seen in other variations of Rosenthal's photograph, this graphic provides a single additional figure to assist with the flag-raising, which, in turn, emphasizes the large "7" in the background. The austere rendering of Rosenthal's photograph allowed this design to be easily reproducible in a variety of contexts, and it appeared on posters and related advertising throughout the drive.

Businesses also promoted the sale of war bonds by repeating the themes of specific drives and, not surprisingly, Rosenthal's *Old Glory*

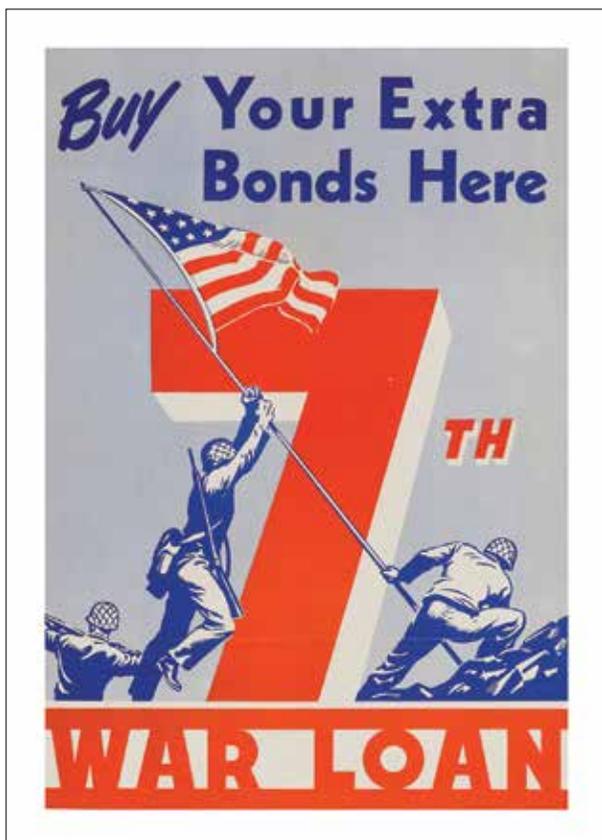


FIGURE 4.7  
*Joseph Reichert, Buy Your Extra Bonds Here, 1945, screenprint.*  
 U.S. Treasury Department,  
 the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula

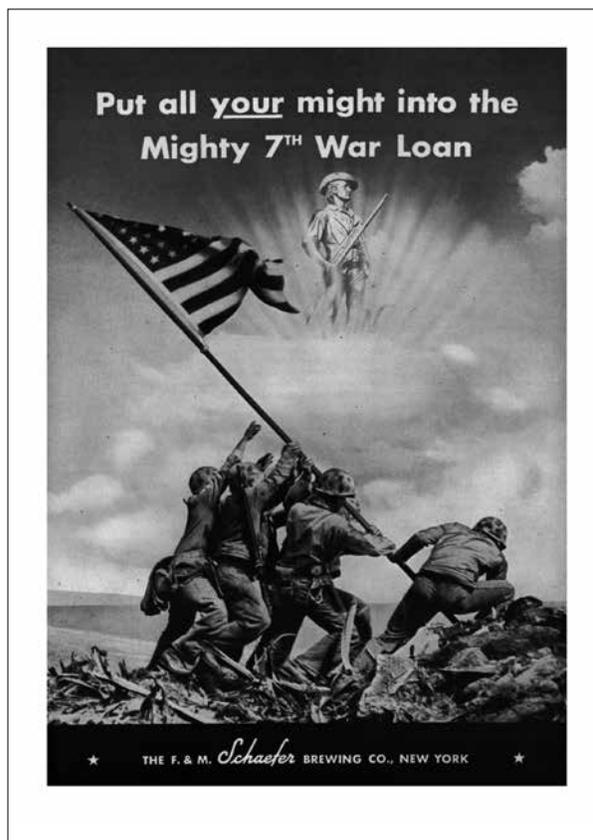


FIGURE 4.8  
*Schaefer Brewing ad, The New Yorker, 26 May 1945.*  
 Competitive Advertisements Collection, J. Walter  
 Thompson Company Archives, John W. Hartman  
 Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History,  
 David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript  
 Library, Duke University

served as an easily adaptable image for numerous examples. Most encouraged the “Now . . . All Together” message seen in Beall’s poster while simultaneously carrying a promotion for the corporate sponsor. For example, near the end of the Mighty Seventh drive, an F. & M. Schaefer Brewing Company advertisement combined Rosenthal’s photograph with French’s *The Minute Man* sculpture (figure 4.8). The majority of the ad features a reproduction of *Old Glory*, seemingly unaltered from the original. The text above states simply: “Put all your might into the Mighty 7th War Loan.” Placed

directly adjacent to the flag, French’s *The Minute Man* seems to float within a cloud in a manner more commonly seen in Renaissance-era paintings of Christ’s apotheosis. The implied message reinforces the connection between the Colonial era and contemporary fighting through a pseudo-religious scene that suggests *The Minute Man* was resurrected on Mount Suribachi.

Other advertisements played off the popularity of *Old Glory* by borrowing the iconic flag-raising form but substituting the Marines with other figures.<sup>37</sup> An ad for Eversharp pens



FIGURE 4.9

*Eversharp ad*, Daily News, 15 June 1945.  
Competitive Advertisements Collection, J. Walter Thompson Company Archives, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

from June 1945 offers an example of this theme (figure 4.9). Here a group of citizens—including a housewife, office workers, and what appear to be manual laborers—strain to raise a large “7,” not a flag. The text above encourages viewers to “Get It Up There!” This phrase references both the large numeral raised by the figures shown and the reader’s own investment in the Mighty Seventh bond drive. At the same time, the ad relies on the iconic form of figures working together to achieve a common goal expressed by both the Seventh War Loan’s message of “Now . . . All Together” and Rosenthal’s *Old Glory*.

Though visible throughout the era, war-themed advertising imagery presents a complicated conflation of corporate and government messages. For example, while both ads above demonstrate clear support for the bond program, neither references a product sold by the graphic’s corporate sponsor. Similar advertisements that expressed patriotic messages but offered few consumer goods were common during the war for several reasons. Consumers saw shortages of numerous products as the war required countless raw materials. The wartime conversion of the economy similarly meant that citizens faced mandatory rationing of goods, which led to a drastic change in purchasing habits.<sup>38</sup> These factors, combined with a general sense of uncertainty about the future, often led to the promotion of austerity that presented corporate advertisers with a serious challenge. To remain in the public’s consciousness, advertisers learned to create patriotic graphics that did not always feature products available for sale. Government officials, acknowledging that advertising agencies could contribute to the improvement of home front morale, worked closely with national advertisers in this effort throughout the war.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, ads that appropriated Rosenthal’s *Old Glory* arguably diluted the photograph’s original potency by recontextualizing the scene within a commercial context.

While corporate ads that relied on Rosenthal’s *Old Glory* offered variations of the “Now . . . All Together” message, official bond promotions projected a far more “realistic” and, in some cases, intense experience. For example, the Seventh War Loan campaign, as with other bond promotions, included public rallies featuring music, celebrity speakers, and other forms of entertainment. Mighty Seventh rallies also included a recreation of the Iwo Jima flag

raising that involved a “performance” by the surviving servicemen who appeared in Rosenthal’s *Old Glory*. These events, used to promote bond sales specifically, were typically orchestrated in stadiums or open public spaces.<sup>40</sup> Related newsreel footage of the drive’s celebratory opening in New York City featured the three survivors from Rosenthal’s photograph raising the flag as an announcer implored: “They raised that flag on Iwo with their blood. Repay them with your bond purchases!”<sup>41</sup> While popular and effective in raising bond sales, these events were psychologically taxing on the men involved. The act of repeatedly “restaging” a moment defined by violence and the loss of comrades undoubtedly affected the participants. The mental and emotional toll clearly contributed to the distress of Private First Class Ira H. Hayes, a Marine in Rosenthal’s photograph, who initially contributed to bond promotions but later withdrew from the tour.<sup>42</sup>

While the spectacle of staged flag raisings ostensibly provided an added authenticity to Beall’s already dramatic rendering of *Old Glory*, a comparable series of promotional events featured an even more elaborate recreation of war. Titled “Here’s Your Infantry,” this traveling 90-minute performance included approximately 1,100 U.S. soldiers who demonstrated various weapons, equipment, and military tactics. Typically staged on an athletic field, “Here’s Your Infantry” events provided civilians with a thrilling—and entirely sanitized—version of mechanized war. Treasury promotions proclaimed that these performances were as “Realistic as War Itself”:

*Doughboys just back from the Philippines, France, Italy, from wherever infantrymen are fighting, will re-create [sic] their experiences and demonstrate their weapons, giving the American public its most vivid realization of*

*the courage of the Doughboy and how that fighting spirit is backed by the best weapons in the world—paid for by War Bond dollars.*

Officials further noted that during these performances soldiers used “their tactics and weapons to *simulate as real* an attack as is possible.” While soldiers demonstrated artillery and troop movements, an announcer explained the exact cost of the weapons being used. Typically, performances culminated with an “attack” on an entrenched group of “Japanese” soldiers.<sup>43</sup> Organized across the country in metropolitan areas and small towns, these performances did not typically include an admission fee though viewers were encouraged to purchase bonds.

While “Here’s Your Infantry” essentially turned war into a spectator event, another Mighty Seventh promotion presented a far more disturbing representation of the fighting abroad on film.<sup>44</sup> Newsreels played a major role in how American civilians experienced the war abroad, and viewers saw footage of the flag-raising at Iwo Jima around the time of the Seventh War Loan campaign. However, other films provided a different, far more intense level of the war’s reality. *Action at Angaur*, produced in 1945 as part of the Seventh War Loan drive, followed the U.S. Army’s 81st Infantry during the fighting on the Palau Islands in late 1944. The film uses a unique combination of actual footage from the war along with theatrical music and a scripted narrative delivered by an anonymous serviceman. The language and imagery featured is far more intense than that seen in Hollywood productions. Numerous scenes in *Action at Angaur* depict actual footage of Japanese soldiers being burned alive while the narrator says, “By this time we had shot, blasted, or cooked six hundred of the little apes.”<sup>45</sup> This violent, racist rhetoric, seen at the time

as necessary to resist a possible downturn in bond sales, contributed to the dehumanization of the enemy. At the end of the film, viewers were encouraged to purchase additional bonds as a modified version of Rosenthal's *Old Glory* appeared on the screen.

## CONCLUSION

The ultimate success of the Seventh War Loan drive is indisputable. The campaign brought in \$26.3 billion, which constituted approximately 188 percent of the Treasury Department's initial goal for the drive. This eventual total set a record as the highest-earning bond campaign of the war.<sup>46</sup> The drive's success resulted not only from its national, multimedia content, but also from the distinct reliance on a level of realism epitomized by the continued presence of Rosenthal's *Old Glory*. As the Mighty Seventh's official poster, Beall's *Now . . . All Together* did more than provide an effective call to arms. Most viewers likely recognized Beall's painting as based on the *Old Glory* photograph, which in turn strongly linked the poster to an actual event. Conversely, most other war loan campaigns relied on imagery that lacked this historical specificity. This approach extended to other Mighty Seventh campaign promotions that reached beyond photographic forms of realism. The resulting emphasis was critical in the ongoing effort to encourage civilians to purchase bonds in the war's final months. Moreover, the success of the Seventh War Loan drive provided a solid base for the transition to the eighth and final bond campaign: the "Victory" drive (29 October–8 December 1945).

Undoubtedly, Rosenthal's *Old Glory* operated as a powerful record from a particularly difficult fight. The image serves to remind viewers today—as during the war—of the Marines who fought and sacrificed at Iwo Jima. At the

same time, the broad distribution and countless variations of Rosenthal's photograph allowed the original image to transcend the limitations of photography to evoke an even more symbolic connotation. Beall's bond poster is a single, though valuable, example of how the meanings associated with *Old Glory* were expanded through a complicated process of appropriation and recontextualization. Moreover, this process increased after the war. Since 1945, *Old Glory* has reappeared throughout American visual culture on countless products, including neckties, cigarette lighters, jewelry, belt buckles, and jigsaw puzzles. Variations continue to appear regularly in advertisements, editorial cartoons, posters, and T-shirts. Perhaps the most famous adaptation, Felix de Weldon's Marine Corps War Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, was commemorated in 1954. However, as demonstrated by Seventh War Loan campaign promotions, the process of expanding the significance of Rosenthal's photograph began even before the war ended.

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## ENDNOTES

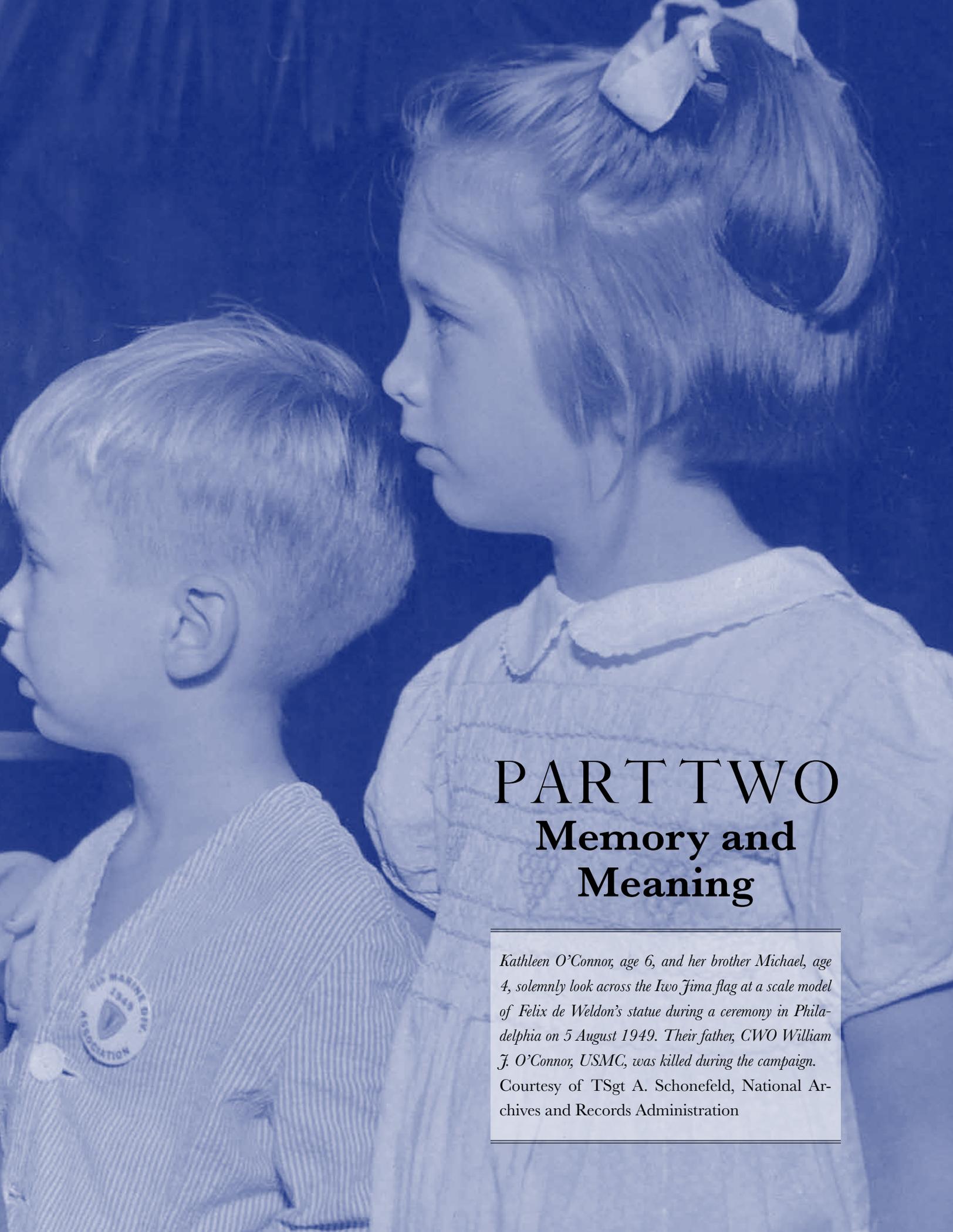
1. The literature on Rosenthal's photograph is extensive. For a broader discussion of the ways in which the photograph has been appropriated and distributed, see Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991). For more on the circulation of the image, see Melissa Renn, "The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising: Iwo Jima Revisited," *History of Photography* 39, no. 3 (August 2015): 253–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2014.995957>.
2. For an analysis of how Rosenthal's photograph was presented during the postwar world, see Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, "Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (November 2002): 363–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630209384385>; and Janis L. Edwards and Carol K. Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (1997): 289–310, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639709384187>.
3. The identities of the servicemen shown has generated

- ongoing controversy. For a recent overview of this issue, see Michael S. Schmidt, "Man in Iwo Jima Flag Photo Was Misidentified, Marine Corps Says," *New York Times*, 23 June 2016.
4. For overviews of the invasion of Iwo Jima, see John Costello, *The Pacific War, 1941–1945* (New York: Rawson, Wade, 1981), 539–47; and Max Hastings, *Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944–45* (New York: Knopf, 2007). For a more critical analysis of the strategic need to attack the island, see Robert S. Burrell, "Breaking the Cycle of Iwo Jima Mythology: A Strategic Study of Operation Detachment," *Journal of Military History* 68, no. 4 (October 2004): 1143–86, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.2004.0175>.
  5. James Bradley with Ron Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000).
  6. Shirley Povich, "DC Man Tells How He Made that Iwo Flag-Raising 'Shot,'" *Washington Post*, 13 March 1945, 1.
  7. "Navy Hails Joe Rosenthal," *New York Times*, 9 March 1945.
  8. "Camera Man Hails Iwo Jima Marines," *New York Times*, 18 March 1945.
  9. William L. Worden, "The Self-Trapped Japs of Iwo," *Saturday Evening Post*, 28 April 1945, 20.
  10. Filan's award-winning photograph, along with several others from Tawara, appeared in *Life*, 1 December 1943, 27–35.
  11. "Iwo Photo Not Posed, Says Joe Rosenthal," *Los Angeles (CA) Times*, 15 June 1945, A1.
  12. "Arms, Character, Courage," *Time*, 5 March 1945, 15.
  13. Renn, "'The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising,'" 260.
  14. T. T. Holden, "Camera Topics," *Plaindealer* (Kansas City, KS), 4 May 1945, 8; and "Art from Life in Defiance of Death," *Times-Union* (Rochester, NY), 27 February 1945.
  15. Renn, "'The Famous Iwo Flag-Raising,'" 259–60. See also Albert Boime, *The Unveiling of the National Icons: A Plea for Patriotic Iconoclasm in a Nationalist Era* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 201.
  16. Amy Porter, "The Week's Work," *Collier's*, 12 May 1945, 74.
  17. Walt Reed, *The Illustrator in America, 1860–2000* (New York: Harper Collins, Society of Illustrators, 2001), 208. For additional records relating to Beall's art, see "W. H. Willson Scrapbooks, 1945–1981," Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
  18. Porter, "The Week's Work," *Collier's*, 74. The editors at *Collier's* had good reason to support Beall's poster in addition to simply promoting the latest war bond drive. Beall often contributed artwork to the magazine; thus, the editors were promoting an artist whose work was associated with their publication.
  19. "Seventh War Loan Drive Gets Under Way Today," *Los Angeles (CA) Times*, 14 May 1945, A1.
  20. An earlier sketch by Beall features the same scenes set against what resembles an explosion. Now at the National Archives, this unfinished design features a strong horizontal orientation and more prominent text. This rendering also decreased the size of the six men raising the flag, which would have diluted the scene's visual impact if printed. This wider orientation suggests this proposal may have been intended for display in buses and trains. See C. C. Beall, *They Also Serve Who Buy War Bonds: The Mighty 7th War Loan, 1942–45*, poster, National Archives, Record Group 208, Original Artwork for World War II Posters, 1942–1945, 7387436.
  21. Quoted in Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 107.
  22. "Artists Profile," *New Yorker*, 17 March 1945, 36. For more on Rockwell and photography, see Ron Schick, *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera* (New York: Little, Brown, 2009).
  23. ShiPu Wang, "Japan against Japan: U.S. Propaganda and Yasuo Kuniyoshi's Identity Crisis," *American Art* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 28–51, <https://doi.org/10.1086/587915>.
  24. "To Inspire a Mighty 7th!," *Minute Man*, 15 May 1945, 2.
  25. Monetary amounts are in mid-1940s dollars. Amounts cited in James J. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 5–6. For more on bonds, see John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (San Diego, New York: Harvest Book, 1977), 16–21.
  26. James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 122–26.
  27. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front*, 43.
  28. Jarvis M. Morse, *Paying for a World War: The United States Financing of World War II* (Washington, DC: U.S. Savings Bond Division, 1971), 90.
  29. Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 232–33.
  30. French completed his work in 1874, but the sculpture was not dedicated until 1875.
  31. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front*, 26; and Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 45.
  32. Mark H. Leff, "The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (March 1991): 1296–1318.
  33. Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 183.
  34. Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 278–81.
  35. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front*, 101.
  36. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front*, 107.
  37. This practice became commonplace in postwar advertising and political cartoons. For examples of the latter, see Edwards and Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph," 289–310.
  38. Cynthia Lee Henthorn, *From Submarines to Suburbs: Selling a Better America, 1939–1959* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).
  39. The most comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the U.S. government and corporate advertisers is Inger L. Stole, *Advertising at War: Business, Consumers, and Government in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).
  40. For a description of these events, including the sculptural reproductions of Rosenthal's photograph, see "Statues Unveiled for 7th War Loan," *New York Times*, 12 May 1945.

41. *Beaten Nazis Sign Historic Surrender*, Universal Studios Newsreel, 14 May 1945.
42. See Albert Hemingway, *Ira Hayes, Pima Marine* (University Press of America, 1988).
43. Although these performances began during the Sixth War Loan, the Treasury's periodic bulletin, *Minute Man*, notes that the number of "Here's Your Infantry" shows expanded significantly during the Seventh War Loan. See "Here's Your Infantry—A Rousing 7th Spectacle!" *Minute Man*, 1 May 1945, 8–9. Emphasis in original was underlined.
44. Though billed as a spectator-friendly event, at least one "Here's Your Infantry" show resulted in injury when an errant bazooka blast left the high school stadium where the performance was held and hit a parked automobile. "Spectator Hurt in War Bond Show," *Washington Post*, 10 June 1945.
45. *Action at Angaur*, 1945, National Archives, ARC ID 35883; and George Roeder Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience during World War Two* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 87, 124.
46. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front*, 7.



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# PART TWO

## Memory and Meaning

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*Kathleen O'Connor, age 6, and her brother Michael, age 4, solemnly look across the Iwo Jima flag at a scale model of Felix de Weldon's statue during a ceremony in Philadelphia on 5 August 1949. Their father, CWO William J. O'Connor, USMC, was killed during the campaign.*

Courtesy of TSgt A. Schonefeld, National Archives and Records Administration

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# DID JOE ROSENTHAL SAVE THE MARINE CORPS?

*The Existential Fight, 1943–52*

*by David W. Mills, PhD*

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Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal stood at the railing of the USS *El Dorado* (AGC 11), staring at the beaches of Iwo Jima as the sun rose over the island on D+4, 23 February 1945. Forrestal contemplated many issues as the minutes ticked away that morning; he was headed to the island for a closer look at the fighting, and he was unsure what lay ahead. A landing craft appeared just before 1000 that morning, and he and the senior Marine at the battle, General Holland M. Smith, descended into the craft wearing life jackets, preparing to go ashore. They watched as the coxswain expertly guided the party to their destination, a landing area designated as one of the Red Beaches on the southern tip of the island. On the way, a member of the crew pointed as Marines hoisted the first flag atop the mountain heights that dominated the island. Cheers arose from the beaches.<sup>1</sup> It was at that moment that Forrestal turned to Smith and said, “Holland, the raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years” (figure 5.1).<sup>2</sup> The banner was small and barely visible, but some-

one found a much larger flag and ordered it installed in place of the smaller one, and photographer Joe Rosenthal took his famous photograph of six Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima (see figure 0.2).<sup>3</sup> The fact that Forrestal was sure that the Marine Corps now had a long-term purpose revealed that it had an immediate problem of relevancy, and by implication, foreshadowed the existential threat the organization would face in the near future.

## ELIMINATION OF THE MARINE CORPS

More than a year before the Iwo Jima landings, in December 1943, Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall had presented his concept of a reorganized military establishment to the highest levels of the federal government, including Senator Harry S. Truman, then the influential head of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. Everyone involved in the discussion agreed that a permanent solution would have to wait for the end of hostilities, and immediately after

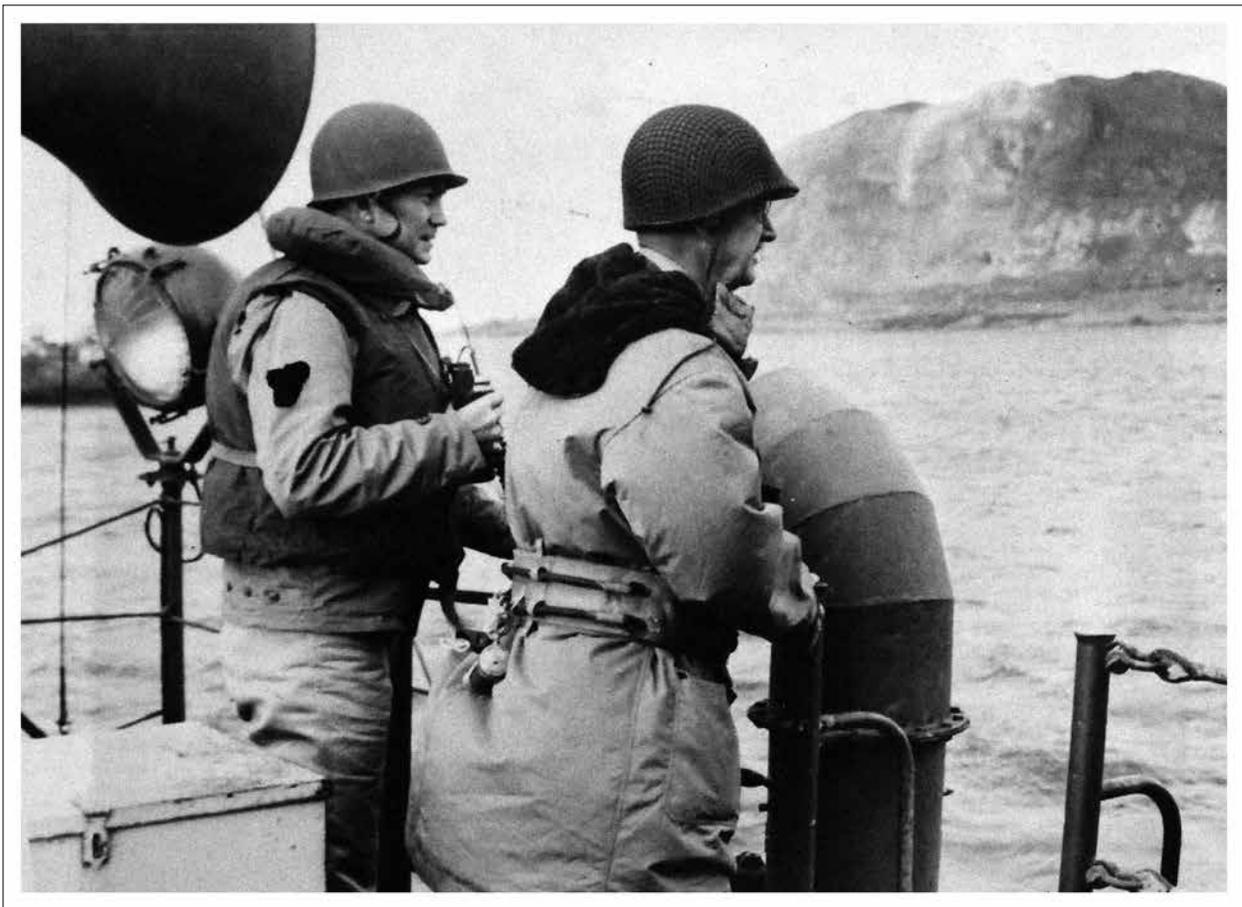


FIGURE 5.1

*Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal (left) and LtGen Holland Smith, commander of the Marine Forces in the Iwo landing, stand at a ship's rail off Iwo Jima and watch the bitter fighting on the island. Mount Suribachi, where the Marines hoisted the American flag, is visible in the background.*  
Office of War Information photo 208-PU-70A-1, National Archives and Records Administration

the war, discussions began that attempted to eliminate the United States Marine Corps and continued through most of the Korean War.<sup>4</sup> This chapter depicts the ways in which Marine Corps leaders continuously defended the Corps between 1945 and 1952 by befriending members of Congress and through a concerted public relations effort centered on Rosenthal's photo. That depiction of the brave Marines was immediately famous, catapulting the Corps into the public consciousness at exactly the time it was most vulnerable. Attempts to abolish the Corps continued through 1952, when public and congressional perception of the Marines'

exceptional performance in Korea prompted the president to codify the Marine Corps mission in perpetuity.

Since its creation on 10 November 1775, the Marine Corps was seen as a source of competition for Army and Navy recruits and budgets, and its elimination would have solved many resource problems for the other two Services. The Marines fought off several attempts to abolish the organization in the nineteenth century, always with the help of Congress, while several important conflicts saved the Corps at the beginning of the twentieth century. An expeditionary battalion of 650 Marines seized the



FIGURE 5.2

*Sidney H. Riesenberg, First to Fight—"Democracy's Vanguard"—U.S. Marine Corps, 1917. U.S. Marine Corps recruitment poster.*

Portland Art Museum, gift of Mr. William Lewis Brewster Jr.

Spanish territory at Guantánamo Bay in 1898, and another Marine force held out during a 75-day siege, outnumbered 100 to 1, in defense of the Foreign Legation in Peking during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The Marines earned their reputation as a tough fighting force, and America fell in love with the Corps. Fathers respected the men's fighting spirit, while boys dreamed of growing up to join their proud tradition.<sup>5</sup>

If the Spanish-American War and the Boxer Rebellion initiated a flirtation between the American population and the Marines, the Corps' participation in World War I sparked a passionate love affair. The Marine Corps leadership hit upon an ingenious marketing campaign in early 1917, even before President

Woodrow Wilson officially brought America into the war in Europe, promising America's youth that if they joined the Corps, they would be the "First to Fight" (figure 5.2). Thus, they drew a large number of recruits who were seeking adventure and spoiling for action, hoping to get to the front as quickly as possible and burnishing their reputation as the toughest force in the American military.<sup>6</sup> Of the many battles in which the Marines participated in World War I, the Battle at Belleau Wood, fought in June 1918, was etched permanently into the memory of an admiring nation. That connection with popular culture was made even more striking when journalist Floyd Gibbons, who lost an eye reporting in the field and military officials mistakenly reported him killed, delivered an uncensored yet vibrant account of Marines in action. Published in the *Chicago Tribune*, his article gave the Corps a public relations windfall as readers throughout America believed these men represented an elite unit of the American Expeditionary Forces and singlehandedly turned the tide of the battle.<sup>7</sup>

Predictably, once the fighting was over, Congress slashed military budgets and reduced staffing authorizations. Prior to Wilson bringing the United States into World War I, the Marine Corps had close to 11,000 officers and enlisted men. Their numbers grew to almost 75,000 Marines of all ranks by the end of the war; but within two years, those numbers had dwindled to around 17,000. Worse yet, the Marines struggled for relevancy and a wartime mission. The other Services turned a covetous eye toward their meager budgets, and again leveled the accusation that the Marine Corps was redundant and lacked a reason to exist. Thus, the Corps needed a convincing story to keep the executioners at bay.<sup>8</sup>

Finding a mission during the interwar

years was not difficult, as many U.S. Navy and Marine officers had identified a new calling for a small but tenacious force. Since their defeat of the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War, waged between 1904 and 1905, the Japanese were a rising and imminent threat to the United States. In 1920, Commandant of the Marine Corps Major General John A. Lejeune ordered his trusted subordinates to address the problem of how to defeat an enemy who controlled a vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean.<sup>9</sup> The dilemma occupied the Marines throughout the 1920s and 1930s, when the Great Depression again threatened their existence. “Alarmed by rumors of its own demise,” wrote military historian Allen R. Millett, “the Marine Corps turned to writing doctrine.”<sup>10</sup> Consequently, under the Commandant’s direction, students and faculty at the Command and Staff College wrote the *Tentative Landing Operations Manual*, and the Marines became experts in amphibious warfare: assaulting well-defended beaches, taking control of an island such as Iwo Jima, and repeating the process on the way toward Japan.<sup>11</sup> The Japanese surrendered at nearly the same point as the Germans at the end of World War II, due in large part to the Corps taking enemy territory near to the home islands and the atomic bombs detonated in August 1945.

While the Corps had survived intact during the war years, V-J Day reopened the argument that the Corps was an unnecessary force.<sup>12</sup> The Army and Army Air Forces launched the opening salvo against the Marine Corps in December 1945, when President Harry S. Truman sent a message to Congress that emphasized his desire to reorganize the military along the lines Marshall had suggested two years earlier. The general had envisioned a number of changes, which included the idea that anything that flew would be in an independent Air Force,

any fighting taking place on land fell under the purview of the Army, and the Navy accepted responsibility for controlling the seas. The plan made no provisions for the Marine Corps, putting its future in doubt. It was Marshall’s proposal that prompted Forrestal’s remark about the 500-year tenure of the Corps in 1945 with the capture of Iwo Jima.<sup>13</sup> Although Truman seemed open to keeping a small contingent of Marines, he privately thought the Corps was a redundant force, and was equally willing to dismantle it altogether. The Army and the Army Air Forces were the primary drivers behind the reorganization effort, with the Navy generally supporting the Marine Corps position. Outspoken and influential Army generals, such as Marshall, former Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Chief of the Army Air Forces Henry H. Arnold, all opposed retaining the Marines as more than a token force, who represented a recruiting and budgetary challenge in the postwar environment.<sup>14</sup>

The Marine Corps leadership organized the opposition to their destruction, designating officers to befriend newspaper reporters, to monitor the activities of the other Services, to write position papers, and to research roles and missions of all Services. A nucleus of Marine colonels—nicknamed the “Chowder Society,” including future Lieutenant General Victor Krulak—formed the main line of defense for retaining the Corps and roamed the halls of the Pentagon and Congress, looking for allies and pleading its case.<sup>15</sup> Their efforts appeared to pay dividends in spring 1946, largely due to the testimony of Marine Corps Commandant General Alexander A. Vandegrift, who stressed the wartime accomplishments of the Corps and its expertise in amphibious operations (figure 5.3). He did not beg the Senate to spare his beloved Corps: “The bended knee is not a



FIGURE 5.3

*Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift, Commandant of the Marine Corps, testifies before the Senate Armed Services Committee to express his strong opposition to the proposed merger of the U.S. armed forces, 24 October 1945.*  
Harris and Ewing, courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library

tradition of our Corps. If the Marine as a fighting man has not made a case for himself after 170 years, he must go. But . . . he has earned the right to depart with dignity and honor, not by subjugation to the status of uselessness.”<sup>16</sup> In the aftermath of the “bended knee” speech, Congress rejected Truman’s bill, the question seemingly settled, though the president made statements to suggest that he was not finished with efforts to reorganize the military Services. The Marines continued to seek allies in their cause.<sup>17</sup>

## THE FREEDOM TRAIN

One friend of the Marine Corps, Attorney General of the United States Tom C. Clark,

had a unique problem. He told his friends and colleagues at the Justice Department that he was concerned for the future of the United States. He argued that families had suffered through the Great Depression and survived the war years by demonstrating great faith in one another and by believing that the righteousness of their cause would ultimately prevail. Almost as soon as the war was over, however, a number of -isms threatened the peace and prosperity that Americans deserved after two decades of struggle. Clark believed some of these menacing ideologies emanated from across the globe and included Communism and totalitarianism, while other philosophies were homegrown and included racism and cynicism. Families and neighbors no longer seemed to look out for one another, but tended only to look out for themselves. “War had fused people into one,” he noted, “but peace brought the disintegration of much of our American unity.”<sup>18</sup>

A colleague suggested to Clark that Americans needed a reminder of their shared history and cherished liberties, but rather than bring all citizens to Washington to reflect on their heritage, why not take that legacy to all Americans where they lived? Clark refined the idea in April 1946, when it morphed into one of the greatest displays of American triumphalism ever attempted.<sup>19</sup> Clark was the driving force behind the Freedom Train, an endeavor to bring more than a hundred of America’s most valued national treasures to the people. Some of these items included the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the flag that six Marines had raised over Iwo Jima and that was memorialized in Rosenthal’s photo. The Freedom Train displayed the relics of American liberties during an 18-month period between September 1947 and January 1949 in



FIGURE 5.4

*Marine standing guard near the Declaration of Independence during the Freedom Train exhibition, 20 October 1948.*  
Historic Photograph File of National Archives Events and Personnel, 1935–1975, Records of the National Archives and Records Administration, 64-NA-1-89

an effort that spanned 33,000 miles and visited more than 330 American cities.<sup>20</sup> Most importantly for the Marines, the endeavor put them in the public eye at a crucial moment, as Clark and the newly created American Heritage Foundation wanted the Marine Corps to provide the security for the nation's treasures and to serve as an honor guard aboard the train at the height of the reorganization fight (figure 5.4).

Clark knew that the greatest challenge the endeavor faced was one of legitimacy, particu-

larly since the government had no stake in the Freedom Train. All administrative and financial obligations came from the private sector support; not a penny came from the federal government.<sup>21</sup> In February 1947, the entire project passed to the American Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization charged with raising money and coordinating the logistics to ensure its success. Specifically, the foundation coordinated the procurement of documents and other artifacts with the Na-



FIGURE 5.5

*Official Freedom Train Postcard based on watercolor painting by Howard L. Fogg for the American Locomotive Company, 1948. Magazines, Photographs, and Progress Reports Relating to the Freedom Train, 1947–1949, Records of the American Heritage Foundation, National Archives and Records Administration*

tional Archives and scheduled transportation with railroad authorities.<sup>22</sup>

The Freedom Train was magnificent. A brand new diesel locomotive painted in festive red, white, and blue striping pulled seven passenger cars: three contained the historic artifacts, one functioned as a baggage car, and three others served as living quarters for the security detail (figures 5.5 and 5.6). Clark had definite ideas regarding who should serve as the security force aboard the train, and wrote to Forrestal in February 1947 to request that he assign the Marine Corps this responsibility. “The Freedom Train will need an armed guard to protect its precious and irreplaceable cargo. I am sure that you will agree with me that the Marine Corps . . . is highly qualified for this job

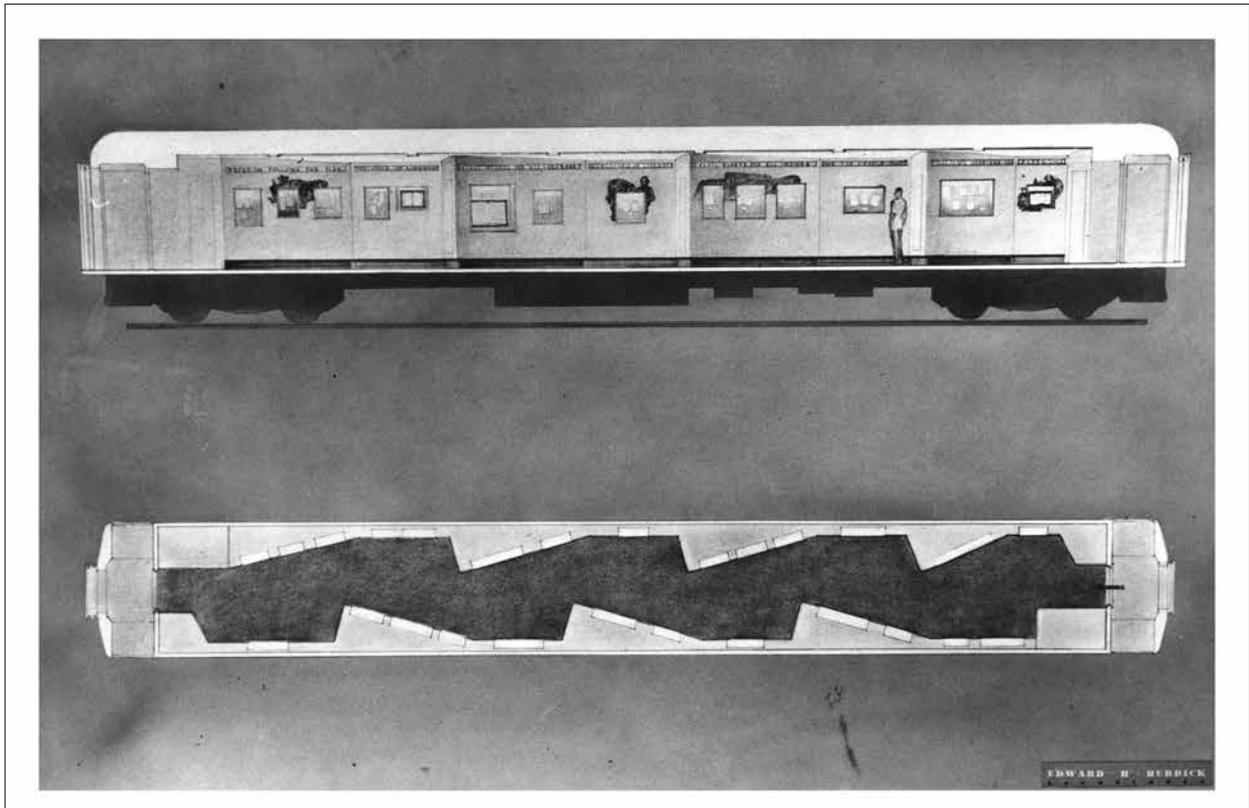


FIGURE 5.6

*The National Archives developed strict construction requirements for the display cases on the Freedom Train. This drawing of the interior shows the layout for the custom-built display cases, which provided the documents with as much protection and visibility as possible. “Freedom Train” Tour, 1947–1949, Records of the American Heritage Foundation, National Archives and Records Administration, 200-AHF-110a*

and this letter is to request you to direct that this outfit be given this assignment.”<sup>23</sup> Forrestal agreed that the Marine Corps was the right unit to provide security for the documents, and passed the tasking to the Marine Corps hierarchy.<sup>24</sup> Upon receiving Forrestal’s response, the attorney general was so pleased that he replied to the secretary: “What the great documents represent in the immortal words and phrases, the young men of the Corps, with their tradition of valor, represent in living American manhood.”<sup>25</sup>

Not everyone in the federal government was enthusiastic about the idea that the Marine Corps would provide the honor guard for this project. Army Major General St. Clair Streett suggested that, since the Army, Navy, and Army Air Forces—soon the United States Air Force—were instrumental in securing the freedoms depicted in the documents and artifacts carried aboard the Freedom Train, then members of all branches of the military should serve aboard the train and rotate through every four months.<sup>26</sup> Each Service had honor guards, highly trained and photogenic individuals who could have served aboard the train. The Army’s 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment had guarded the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier since 1926; the Navy’s Honor Guard dated back to 1931; and the Marine Corps had honor guards located at various Marine bases, though the Silent Drill Team still had another year before its creation in 1948. Even the Coast Guard had an honor guard, which further confused the situation.<sup>27</sup> Arguing that the Corps possessed the unique ability to perform honor guard duties was futile, but the Marines had other reasons to claim the responsibility in March 1947. They had a tradition of providing security for mail trains, the White House, various embassies around the world, and the United Nations; therefore, it stood to reason

that guarding the Freedom Train fell squarely within the Marine Corps mission.<sup>28</sup> Clark and the foundation’s leadership unveiled the project to America in a press conference held at the White House in May 1947 with the question of the honor guard unresolved.<sup>29</sup>

## TAKING THE BATTLE TO CONGRESS

While Clark and his aides discussed the details behind the Freedom Train project, the battle to disband the Corps began earnestly again in January 1947, when Army officials recommended another reorganization of the Services. The military chiefs realized that dropping the atomic bombs on Japan had ushered in a new era of warfare, one that reduced the importance of conventional forces and emphasized strategic bombing and nuclear weapons. The United States needed air power to deliver an attack on its enemies, a powerful navy to protect its trade routes, and a land component to safeguard the homeland; but America no longer needed the Marine Corps, they argued.<sup>30</sup> Vandegrift and his inner circle were no longer focused on survival; the Corps’ existence must be expressed in the law. The small contingent began to cultivate relationships with members of Congress, many of whom were Marine reservists or veterans of the Corps.<sup>31</sup> Many Americans also joined the fight to save the Marine Corps, reminded of the sacrifices the Corps endured in defending the United States, particularly invoking the symbolism of Iwo Jima. In a February 1947 speech before the Navy Council Conference, Vandegrift concluded: “The weapon that conquered Iwo Jima was not produced in the vast arsenals of industry, but in the hearts of the American people who were represented there by the finest they could send to do battle with our mortal enemy.”<sup>32</sup>

Truman forwarded the reorganization bill on 26 February 1947—with no input from the Marine Corps leadership—and then it proceeded to the two houses of Congress. The Senate approved the bill on 9 July as a matter of routine and with no changes or legislative protection for the Marines; however, things unfolded differently in the House. Former Marines in Congress—such as Paul H. Douglas, George A. Smathers, Joseph R. McCarthy, and Michael J. Mansfield, as well as Carl Vinson, Clare E. Hoffman and others—took on the fight the Marines had waged in earnest since 1945, providing support for them within the framework of the government that sought to destroy them.<sup>33</sup>

Representative Clare E. Hoffman of Michigan took charge of the bill and kept it before the entire committee instead of passing it on to a subcommittee, as expected. The Marines of the Chowder Society had discussed their concerns with Hoffman, who shepherded the bill through his committee and called numerous witnesses to testify, none of whom could explain how dismantling the Marine Corps was in the best interest of the nation. Hoffman's committee rewrote the House bill before them with the help of the Chowder Society, setting the framework for the National Security Act of 1947. The House and Senate versions of the reorganization bill required a conference committee to resolve the vast differences between them; when it met, the committee adopted the House version of the bill in its initial discussions, keeping most of the important details. Truman acquiesced, realizing he would not get the independent Air Force he wanted without relenting on protection for the Marines. Most significant, the bill guaranteed the existence of the Marine Corps once President Truman signed the act into law on 25 July 1947. The new directive

brought much relief to the Corps' supporters, who had worked diligently to guarantee the existence of the Service, but it did not mandate the size of the organization. Theoretically, the role of the Marines was vague enough that the president, at any future date, could starve the force to near nothing by slashing its budget. This is exactly what Truman would later attempt to do, and the contention between the Services and the Marine Corps continued.<sup>34</sup>

## MARINES ABOARD THE FREEDOM TRAIN

As events played out in Congress, the function of honor guard was left unsettled as the launch date for the Freedom Train approached, with a scheduled departure from Philadelphia in September 1947. The new secretary of defense, Kenneth C. Royall, supported the idea of including all of the armed Services in performing honor guard duties, while the new secretary of the Navy, John L. Sullivan, sternly opposed this suggestion in September 1947.<sup>35</sup> First, Sullivan argued that Attorney General Clark had specifically requested the Marine Corps to fulfill this mission, and noted that Clark was the government official responsible for the security of all historic items aboard the train. Furthermore, the American Heritage Foundation also requested the Marine Corps fulfill the mission of guarding the items.<sup>36</sup> Finally, Sullivan shamed Royall and Streett by suggesting their motives were nothing short of a recruiting effort to benefit the other Services, when the most important aspect of the operation was the safety of the military personnel aboard the train and the protection of the priceless American artifacts. The logical choice for that mission was the Marine Corps, he argued, and “such a sudden change in plans might even create the unfortunate impression that there is dissention among

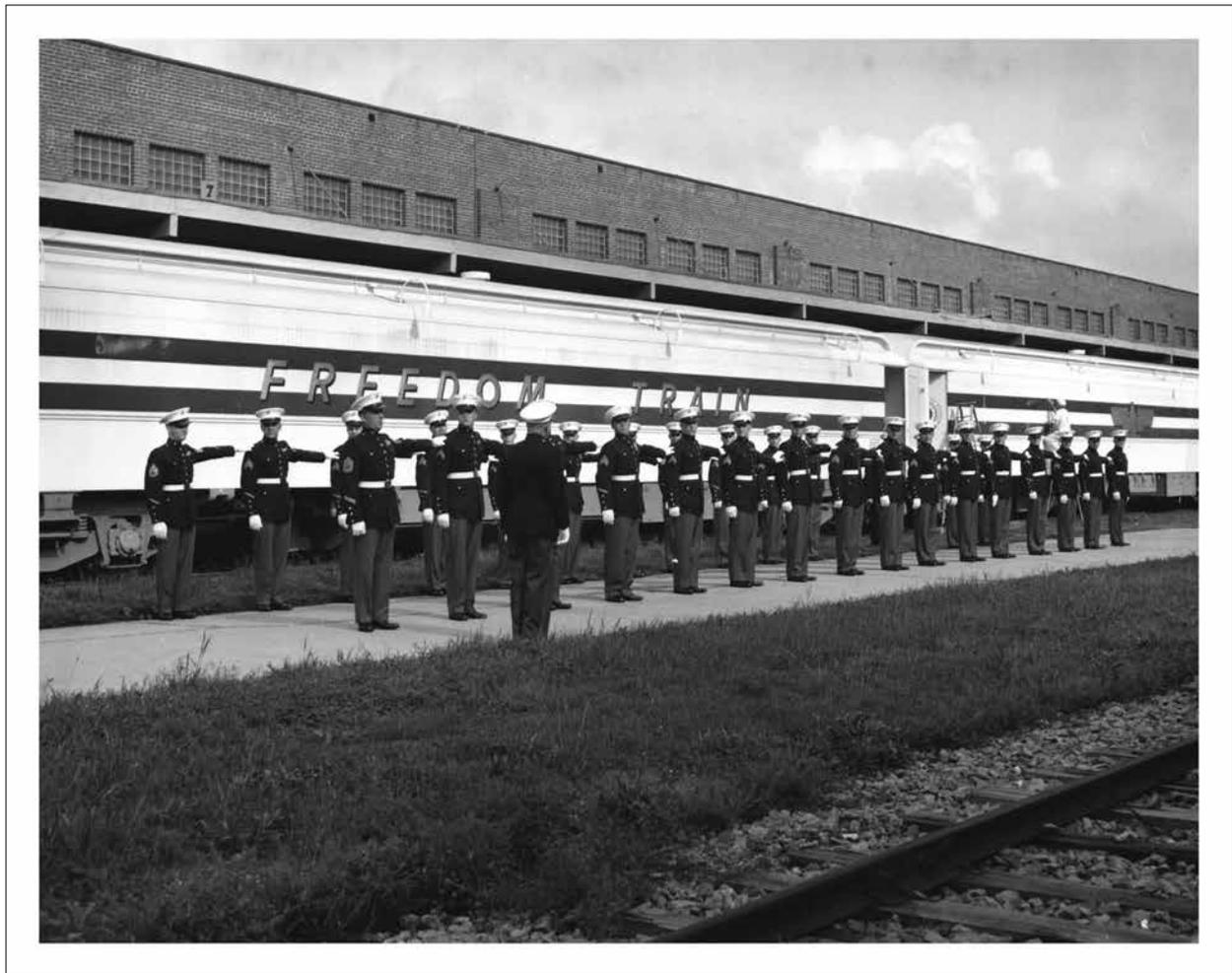


FIGURE 5.7

*Marine guard standing at attention in front of the Freedom Train, 1947–49.*

“Freedom Train” Tour, 1947–1949, Records of the American Heritage Foundation, National Archives and Records Administration, 200-AHF-21

the services about so small a matter as a security guard of 27 men.”<sup>37</sup> How ironic that Sullivan suggested there was no friction between the Services at the time the Marines were fighting for their organizational existence. Royall and Streett backed down, and the Marines kept the mission for the duration of the Freedom Train tour.

The Marine Corps tapped three officers, three senior noncommissioned officers, and two dozen sergeants and corporals to serve

as the Freedom Train Honor Guard (figure 5.7).<sup>38</sup> One of the Marines who served in that unit, Sergeant (later Colonel) Henry W. Steadman, recalled the day a special dispatch came to his unit at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, asking for volunteers who stood between five feet eleven inches to six feet one inch, with a lean appearance in their uniform, to report for an initial screening.<sup>39</sup> Everyone knew that some special duty was available, enticing approximately 200 volunteers to report the first



FIGURE 5.8

*Ira Hayes, one of the surviving Marines who raised the flag on Mount Suribachi, stands with Freedom Train guard Cpl Earl W. Rudolph on 20 February 1948 in Phoenix, AZ.*

General Records Relating to the 1947–1949 Freedom Train Exhibitions, National Archives and Records Administration

day. Officials reduced this number to the final eight selectees during subsequent assessments, including Steadman. The eight Marines from Camp Lejeune joined others from around the nation and formed the Freedom Train Honor Guard, all of whom provided crowd control and continuous security for the priceless documents and artifacts on display. Four Marines were always on guard duty, each armed with .45-caliber pistols, while others greeted visitors and explained the history behind many of the items to citizens as they toured the train.<sup>40</sup> The appearance of the sharply dressed Marines on duty in each major city in America served to enhance the reputation of the Marines and en-

couraged the public to support the retention of the Corps as a fighting force.

## THE PUBLIC, THE FREEDOM TRAIN, AND THE MARINE CORPS

Of all the documents and artifacts selected for inclusion on the Freedom Train tour, the public felt the strongest ties to the American flag raised by six Marines over Mount Suribachi (figure 5.8). The Iwo Jima flag had received such notoriety at the time of the Pacific battle that nearly every American had heard of it and felt some association with it. Rosenthal's picture was the only one to have won a Pulitzer Prize in the same year it was taken, suggesting the level of notoriety associated with it and the profound effect on the American public immediately after the war.<sup>41</sup> Now, they could see the flag up close. Because of its inclusion on the Freedom Train, program directors considered the Iwo Jima flag as one of the most important symbols of democracy and freedom, on the same level as the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. The American Heritage Foundation published a companion book, *Heritage of Freedom*, which described each historic item carried aboard the Freedom Train. The description of the Iwo Jima flag read as follows: "Enshrined in the hearts of all Americans is the flag raised on Mount Suribachi by the U.S. Marines in the invasion of Iwo Jima."<sup>42</sup>

When the Freedom Train made its rounds throughout the United States, the public felt a distinct relationship with the Marines and the flag they raised over Iwo Jima, particularly in Missoula, Montana. The first flag raised on Mount Suribachi that day was taken from the transport ship named after the city, the USS *Missoula* (APA 211), a fact proudly proclaimed

on the front page of *The Daily Missoulian* on the day the Freedom Train came into town. The article also pointed out that one of their own boys from Evaro, Montana, located just outside Missoula, was finally on his way home from the Pacific. Private First Class Louis C. Charlo was one of the first men to reach the top of Mount Suribachi and was there, providing security for the others, when they raised the first flag over the island. Charlo died in the fighting on Iwo Jima six days later and was interred on the island in a temporary grave until 1948, when he and thousands of other Marines also killed in the war finally came home. Reports of the repatriation of Marines, and their sacrifices in the Pacific, appeared in newspapers around the nation.<sup>43</sup>

Even cities without a direct connection to the battle responded to the flag as an important symbol of freedom. At a stop in Hagerstown, Maryland, a heavy thunderstorm had kept most people away from the Freedom Train throughout the afternoon. As the rain let up, a reporter made his way onto the train and came upon two veterans standing in front of the glass case containing the flag flown over Iwo Jima. Each of the men had their heads bowed, their hands folded, and their eyes fixed on the flag as they prayed silently. Not wanting to disturb the men in their moment of solemnity, he stood at a respectful distance and waited for the men to finish the ritual they had begun. Silently, the men concluded their meditation and exited the display. Were the men veterans themselves, and had they been on that Pacific island or another battlefield and offered up their prayers for their friends who never came home? Those answers remain unclear.<sup>44</sup>

On average, approximately 8,500 people could board the train at each stop and view the contents in one day (figure 5.9). Many who

wanted to enter the Freedom Train could not because of space limitations, especially in major metropolitan areas, so each city that the Freedom Train visited was required to hold a “Rededication Week.” The purpose of this special time was to review the lessons of the Freedom Train and the cargo it carried. The American Heritage Foundation sent nine men to help coordinate the week-long celebration, officially appointing the city’s mayor as the program chairperson. Those distinctive periods lasted seven days, and were scheduled to begin one week before the train arrived. A Rededication Week could start on a Tuesday or Thursday as easily as a Saturday or Monday, with each day dedicated to a new theme, such as a Veterans Day, a Labor and Industry Day, a Youth Day, or a Women’s Day, among others. Local efforts varied, but the idea was to reflect on the ideals of the Freedom Train before it arrived so visitors were in the right frame of mind to receive the important lessons.

Across the nation, veterans and enthusiasts recreated the events depicted in the Iwo Jima photograph as part of their Rededication Weeks. City officials in Burlington, Vermont, organized a parade the evening before the Freedom Train arrived on 15 October 1947, then repeated the performance on the following day. In addition to the parade, bands played throughout the downtown area, businesspersons donned Pilgrim attire, the city mayor dressed as George Washington, and a group of Marine Corps veterans reenacted the raising of the Iwo Jima flag on the front steps of the Burlington City Hall.<sup>45</sup> As part of the Rededication Week that took place in Joplin, Missouri, on 4 June 1948, city officials held a parade to depict the blessings of freedom and liberty. For their entry, the Marine Corps League constructed a float shaped like the island of Iwo Jima, com-



FIGURE 5.9

*Visitors wait to see the Freedom Train in San Francisco, CA, 1947–49.*  
 “Freedom Train” Tour, ca. 1948, Records of the American Heritage Foundation,  
 National Archives and Records Administration, 200-AHF-61

plete with foxholes, and had Marine Corps veterans in battle uniforms reenacting the flag raising from the famous battle. One of the members, George C. Brooks, had only recently completed his 15th operation since suffering wounds on Iwo Jima, but he took his place on the float.<sup>46</sup> Farther west, city leaders in Ogden, Utah, held their parade the evening before the Freedom Train arrived on 26 March 1948. The American Legion Drum Corps led the procession, followed by the Marine Corps detachment from Clearfield Naval Supply Depot marching

in front of their float that also reenacted the flag raising over Mount Suribachi.<sup>47</sup>

## THE FINAL CONFRONTATION IN CONGRESS

In the midst of all this, the public relations fight to save the Corps continued. Congress may have saved the Corps in law, but the president still controlled the budget, and Truman attempted to starve the Marines into oblivion after signing their reprieve in 1947. The Ma-

rines had six divisions at the height of the war in 1945, but retained only two emaciated units by 1948, which Truman planned to reduce to one division. The Corps' leadership continued to fight for the existence of the Marines by playing on its popularity. The Commandant revitalized the role of the Marine Corps as the premier force in readiness and burnished its image as the "First to Fight," incorporating the iconic image of the Marines in World War II, particularly those at Iwo Jima.<sup>48</sup>

The Marines also developed relationships with celebrities and Hollywood producers, most famously when the Corps and Republic Pictures teamed up for the production of *Sands of Iwo Jima*, a 1949 war movie that used Rosenthal's picture as the central narrative framework. Producer Edmund Grainger promised to use his influence in Washington in exchange for Marine Corps support of the motion picture. It was an easy decision for the new Commandant, General Clifton B. Cates, who offered the base at Camp Pendleton, California, for filming, plus huge quantities of weapons, vehicles of all varieties, airplanes, and 2,000 Marines who served as extras in the film. The most important casting decision was for the star of the film, a veteran Marine who kept his younger men alive, teaching them to become Marines themselves. Cates used his position as Commandant of the Marine Corps to request that John Wayne star in the movie, in spite of the actor's initial reluctance.<sup>49</sup> The screenplay memorialized the battle and the flag raising, and even managed a cameo appearance of surviving Iwo Jima veterans Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John H. Bradley, Private First Class Ira H. Hayes, and Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon.<sup>50</sup> The producers took great care in recreating the flag raising just as Rosenthal's photograph depicted it, reinforcing the public's emotional connection with the

Marines on Iwo Jima and with the work to save the Corps. Hollywood and the Marine Corps would produce three more movies during the Korean War: *Halls of Montezuma* (1951), *Retreat, Hell!* (1952), and a remake of *What Price Glory* (1952). Additionally, a fundraising campaign to construct the Marine Corps War Memorial was underway. Each of these efforts served to enhance the reputation of the Marine Corps at a critical time in its history.<sup>51</sup>

The surprise attack on 25 June 1950, which saw North Korean Communists pour over the border into South Korea, served as the final contributing factor to the survival of the Marine Corps. In a herculean effort, the Marines brought the 1st Marine Brigade into action in the rapidly shrinking port city of Pusan, staving off disaster there. Later, the Marines played a pivotal role in the assault at Inchon in September, a move that turned the effort from a purely defensive action to a rout of the North Korean Army. Press accounts throughout the tough fighting in Korea depicted the performance of the Corps, particularly at Chosin and the Punchbowl, as nothing short of effusive, while other Services faced harsh criticism. Members of the House used the flattering exploits as justification to sponsor new legislation clarifying and expanding the responsibilities of the Corps. Truman remained doubtful, believing those sympathetic to the Corps had organized a conspiracy to shine undeserved praise on the Service. He sent Army General Frank E. Lowe to inspect the units in theater and to report on the situation. Lowe's reports condemned senior Army officials in Korea, but declared that "the First Marine Division is the most efficient and courageous combat unit I have ever seen or heard of."<sup>52</sup> In a letter to a friend in Congress, Truman privately mocked the value of the Marines and joked that it had a public relations arm

almost as effective as Russian leader Joseph Stalin's, a biting critique at this early phase in the Cold War. That friend, Representative Gordon L. McDonough, released the letter to the press and the backlash was tremendous. The public swamped Truman with letters objecting to his characterization of the Corps. The overwhelming public support, as evidenced by the public's letters and glowing articles in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Look*, *Fortnight*, and numerous daily papers set the stage for what would be the final confrontation.<sup>53</sup>

During its fight for longevity, the Marine Corps needed an image to rally around, and the Rosenthal picture remained just beneath the public consciousness throughout the battle to save the Service. As historian Robert S. Burrell wrote in *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, "The Marine Corps took its case for survival to the American public. The heroism of Marines on Iwo Jima, as symbolized by Joe Rosenthal's picture, played a key role in mobilizing the support that inspired the National Security Act of 1947 and its subsequent revision in 1952—both of which saved the Marine Corps as a fighting organization."<sup>54</sup> The Marines would serve as their best spokespersons. Specifically, the Freedom Train introduced Marines to an admiring public who otherwise might never have met one. The population of the United States stood at close to 151 million people according to the 1950 census, and an estimated 35–40 million citizens participated in Freedom Train activities that featured the Marine Corps.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the *Sands of Iwo Jima* garnered four Academy Award nominations and was ranked as one of the top 10 money-earning motion pictures of 1950. Reviewers and the public loved the film, including its emotional story and heart-stopping battle scenes, which served to keep the popular image of the Marines in the national

spotlight.<sup>56</sup> Many members of Congress were sympathetic to the Marines' plight, and actively sought to protect them. Truman backed down in the face of overwhelming pressure, and in June 1952, he signed into law an amendment to the National Security Act of 1947 that specifically outlined the minimum force structure of the Marine Corps, which stood at a minimum of three combat divisions and three air wings in peacetime. Additionally, the legislation gave the Commandant a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it designated the Marine Corps the experts on amphibious warfare.<sup>57</sup>

This combination of friendly members of Congress, the movie industry, and the Freedom Train came together to hold off the destruction of the Corps until their performance in Korea finally guaranteed their continuing existence. Likewise, the Rosenthal photograph further validated Forrestal's prediction of a Marine Corps stretching for 500 years into the future as he had promised off the shores of Iwo Jima. Through the Cold War and into the Global War on Terrorism, the flag that once flew over Iwo Jima serves as a reminder to all Americans—past, present, and future—that some ideals are worth the ultimate price. As long as there is a need to protect our nation, preserving organizations that perform those duties must remain a priority. To paraphrase the poet A. E. Housman, as long as our nation continues to produce the kind of heroes who planted that flag on the island of Iwo Jima, then God will continue to bless our nation.<sup>58</sup>

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20. Fried, *The Russians Are Coming!*, 31.
21. Fried, *The Russians Are Coming!*
22. Stuart J. Little, “The Freedom Train: Citizenship and Postwar Culture, 1946–1949,” *American Studies* 34, no. 1 (Spring, 1993): 40–41; “‘Freedom Train’ to Tour U.S. in Fight on Crime,” *Times Herald* (Washington, DC) 19 June 1947, n.p. The American Heritage Foundation was a nonprofit organization founded to provide oversight for the Freedom Train project.
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24. James Forrestal to Thomas C. Clark, 7 March 1947, NARA, hereafter Forrestal letter.
25. Thomas C. Clark to James Forrestal, 25 March 1947, NARA.
26. St. Clair Streett to unnamed Secretary of War, n.d., NARA.
27. Patrick Long, “Military Honor Guards,” *TheBalance.com*, 24 January 2016.
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29. Little, “The Freedom Train,” 40–41.
30. Robert S. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1970), 160–61.
31. Krulak, *First to Fight*, 40–41; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 461–62.
32. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 169. Vandegrift wrote that he did not want to enflame the situation by mobilizing the American public in the fight to save the Marine Corps, but it happened. The topic was too emotional.
33. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 496–507.
34. Krulak, *First to Fight*, 45–51; Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 172; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 462–63.
35. Kenneth C. Royall to John L. Sullivan, n.d., NARA.
36. John L. Sullivan to Kenneth C. Royall, 19 September 1947, NARA, hereafter Sullivan letter.
37. Sullivan letter.
38. The number of Honor Guard members is disputed in many sources and varies from 24 to 30, with the number 30 being the most common among the memoirs of those who served.
39. “Marine Barracks, Washington D.C.,” Barracks.Marines.mil, accessed 1 August 2017. All of the military Services used the same general selection criteria for their local and national honor guard units at this time.
40. “Freedom Train,” *Leatherneck*, September 1993, 18–19; and “Freedom Train 1947,” *Leatherneck*, March 1998, 24–25.
41. “25 of the Most Iconic Photographs,” CNN, 27 September 2016. The Iwo Jima photograph was listed as the number three all-time most popular photograph. The photo ranked number one was the sailor kissing the woman in Times Square at the end of World War II, while the second most iconic photo was the lone Chinese protestor standing in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square.
42. Frank Monaghan, *Heritage of Freedom: The History and Significance of the Basic Documents of American Liberty* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948), 143.
43. “Historic Freedom Train Here Today,” *Daily Missoulian* (Missoula, MT), 15 April 1948, 1.
44. “8,000 Brave Threatening Weather Here to Inspect Freedom Train,” *Daily Mail* (Hagerstown, MD), 9 October 1948, 16.
45. “Burlington Meets the Freedom Train,” *Look*, 6 January 1948, 8–9.
46. “Marines to Enter Float of Iwo Jima in Parade,” *Joplin (MO) Globe*, 30 April 1948, 2C; and Fried, *The Russians Are Coming!*, 4.
47. “Parade, Mass Meeting to Precede Arrival,” *Ogden (UT) Standard Examiner*, 19 March 1948, 1.

48. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 161, 173.
49. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 175–76.
50. Ranks listed current at time of the battle. At the time of the movie’s production, these three were believed to be participants in the second flag raising.
51. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 173–80; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 511.
52. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 180–81; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 498.
53. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 481–98.
54. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 158.
55. Fried, *The Russians Are Coming!*, ix–xi; and “1950 Fast Facts,” United States Census Bureau, 18 July 2017.
56. Burrell, *Ghosts of Iwo Jima*, 179.
57. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 496–507.
58. A. E. Housman, “From Clee to Heaven the Beacon Burns,” in *A Shropshire Lad* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Treubner, 1896). The original line was: “Oh, God will save her, fear you not: Be you the men you’ve been, Get you the sons your fathers got, And God will save the Queen.”

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# POLITICS IN THE ART OF PORTRAITURE

## *Felix de Weldon's Marine Corps War Memorial*

*by Kate Clarke Lemay, PhD*

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On 23 February 1945, a Navy ensign named Felix de Weldon posted at the Naval Air Station Patuxent near the Chesapeake Bay caught his first sight of Joe Rosenthal's photograph of the flag raising on the peak of Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima. The now-famous photograph shows six soldiers moving from left to right, working together to drive one end of a pipe into the craggy ground. At the other end, the Stars and Stripes wave toward heaven from its corners strapped onto the pipe with pieces of rope. The image is a series of complex juxtapositions; the pipe with the flag reaches to the left upper half, while the driving force of the men tug the motion back down to the lower right. The hands of the left-most figure reach up, while the intense gaze of the right-most figure anchors the action into the ground. The oppositional forces create a tension that is frozen in time—an always-interesting moment. The fact that the photograph caught a historic moment during World War II, when American soldiers captured Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima, meant that an icon was made.<sup>1</sup>

A sculptor by training, de Weldon had

been searching for a moment like this his entire life. His artistic career had taken him from the schools of Austria to England, Canada, and finally the United States. Along the way, he had proven to be exceptionally good at spotting an opportunity. De Weldon, whose primary responsibility in the Navy was to create a visual record of the war, immediately got permission from his commanding officer to make a three-dimensional replica of the photograph. During the subsequent three days, he constructed a scale model in wax. Meanwhile, the Rosenthal photograph was published on the front page of the *Washington Post*, creating, from the point of view of Headquarters Marine Corps, “tremendous favorable comment.”<sup>2</sup> During the next nine years, de Weldon persisted with his project, developing what would eventually become the Marine Corps War Memorial located on Arlington Ridge, Virginia. President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the memorial on 10 November 1954, the 179th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps (figure 6.1).

What today we take for granted as a symbol of military heroism was, in fact, a contested

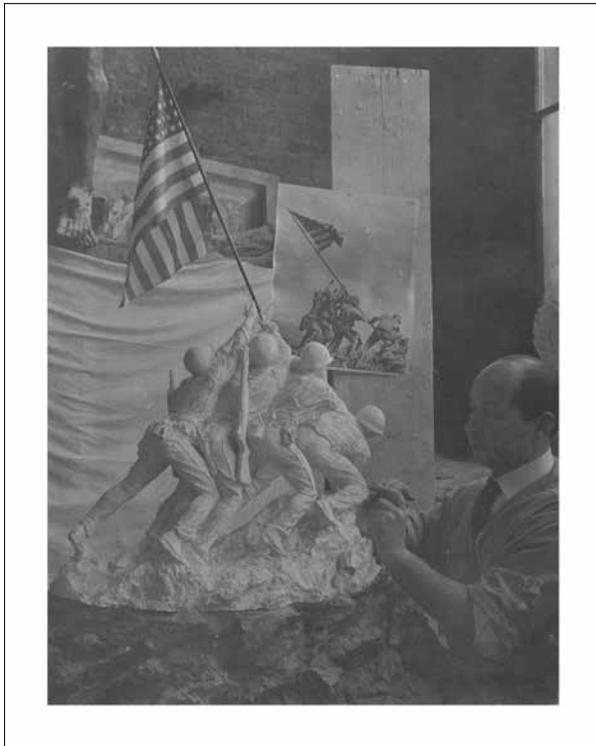


FIGURE 6.1

*Sculptor Felix de Weldon works on a scale model of the Iwo Jima flag raising for the proposed Marine Corps War Memorial, 18 February 1950. Behind him hangs Joe Rosenthal's Associated Press photograph, which immortalized the flag-raising event.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo 313564,  
National Archives and Records Administration

and embattled design concept at the time of its creation. Indeed, the statue of the flag raisers came into being only through grit and tenacity of de Weldon and the U.S. Marine Corps. From 1945 to 1950, de Weldon's proposed memorial was the focus of a power struggle between art world traditionalists versus the avant-garde, as well as a case of military officials versus other government agencies.<sup>3</sup> During the early years of the Cold War, the Corps was in crisis, fighting for its very right to exist—separate from the Army into which it was under threat of being subsumed—and its leaders found in de Weldon an artist who could translate the heroic contributions of its members during World War II into monumental visual form.<sup>4</sup> The act of raising the flag, of perseverance during the risk of

one's own peril, clearly indicated American valor, which in turn helped legitimize the Marines' continuing role as an autonomous fighting force during the Cold War and beyond. De Weldon knew that he had a captive employer, one that would be his patron throughout the rest of his career. To that end, he would go to any length to keep the favor of the Marine Corps. Whereas the art world outright dismissed de Weldon as a hack sculptor, he was upheld by the Marine Corps as the purveyor of its legacy.

## THE ROLE OF ART IN LEGACY: CONGRESS, THE COMMISSION, AND THE CORPS

In February 1946, during the 79th Congress, House Representative Henry D. Larcade Jr. introduced a bill requesting \$100,000 for a memorial to “members of the armed forces of the United States who fought in World War II.”<sup>5</sup> Felix de Weldon's original wax model of the flag raisers accompanied Larcade's bill, essentially earmarking him as the artist for the proposed memorial. Born and educated in Austria, de Weldon first came to the United States in 1937 by way of Canada. He claimed he had achieved artistic prominence in continental Europe, and then he actually achieved it when he created a portrait bust of Prime Minister Mackenzie King.<sup>6</sup> After entering the United States, he stayed, becoming an American citizen in 1945. While serving with the U.S. Navy during World War II, he was tasked to build the official art collection for that Service branch.<sup>7</sup> The immediate resonance and popularity of Rosenthal's photograph, reproduced innumerable times in the press and emblazoned on war bond posters and postage stamps, meant that de Weldon's three-dimensional rendering achieved equal iconic weight, particularly among military officials. By the mid-year, the

figural group depicting the flag raising at Iwo Jima was made into plaster, and placed in front of the Navy Building (now demolished) on Constitution Avenue, where it remained until 1947 (figure 6.2).<sup>8</sup> While the placement of this ephemeral statue paid tribute to the combined amphibious assault of sailors and Marines, the small-scale model and language of Larcade's proposed bill demonstrate that the congressman's original idea was to use de Weldon's sculpture as a monument to the entire war, and not one specifically to those soldiers who fought and died while serving with the U.S. Marine Corps.<sup>9</sup> The memorial's dedication solely to the Marines would come later.

Rosenthal's photograph transcended the historical event through its usage in the Seventh War Loan drive, on postage stamps, and Marine Corps recruitment posters. Its powerful symbolic value also nearly coincides with the Freedom Train that toured the country in 1947–49, whose proposal gelled in April 1946.<sup>10</sup> Yet immediately, the proposed statue drew both the ire and the advocacy of Washingtonians. In a letter to the editor of the *Washington Post*, Forbes Watson, then-chief advisor and consultant for the Treasury Department's public art program—and who served with the Red Cross during World War I—wrote, “I wonder how many men who fought in Germany would consider the conquest of Iwo Jima a memorial to them?” Watson, clearly livid, went on:

*If Representative Henry D. Larcade consults the Fine Arts Commission or discusses his proposal with a sculptor of standing, he undoubtedly will withdraw his bill without making any further effort to devote \$100,000 of the tax payers' money to a memorial which opportunely trades upon the success of a photograph. Good sculpture isn't made that way. The idea of this statute was wrong from the*



FIGURE 6.2

*Felix de Weldon's first monument depicting the Iwo Jima flag raising stood in front of the Navy Department Building from 1945 to 1947, when it was removed due to construction of an office building for the Pan American Union.*

Courtesy Rodney Hilton Brown, J.D., The War Museum

*start. And to dwell on its ineptitude is superfluous.*<sup>11</sup>

Suggesting a compromise, Watson strongly urged a national competition for such a memorial to the war, which he obviously felt would eliminate the offensive sculpture by de Weldon.<sup>12</sup>

In the same issue of the *Washington Post*, however, another letter supported the statue. Alexander C. Hoagland Jr., who served with the U.S. Naval Reserves from 1945 to 1946, wrote of de Weldon's group, “Not only does it create in one a stir of pride at seeing Old Glory bodily scaling new heights, but also pictures grime, sweat and aching fatigue, grim shadows of war that we must not let be obscured by the bright lights of victory.”<sup>13</sup> Hoagland thought de Weldon's statue was a wonderful statement of American military heroism in World War II. A week later, another letter appeared to comment further. A Washington resident named E. Harrison ultimately supported the “flag-raising statue,” but he questioned what the memorial was, in fact, “remembering.” He weighed in on

the weakness of using a battle specific to the Marine Corps as *the* representative moment for the whole war: “I think Mr. Forbes Watson, author of the other letter, has something when he suggests that the Iwo Jima group would not represent all our fighting forces. . . . Be that as it may, the Iwo Jima group should be made permanent as it now has become a symbol all over the United States and its possessions, of what our men fought and died for.”<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, the Commission of Fine Arts heard about the proposed statue and were immediately offended by the blatant copying of a photograph. The commission, established in 1910, has reviewed every work of art and architecture proposed for construction in the city limits of Washington, DC. Its members have been presidential appointees and, until the 1960s, its all-male members wielded the most political power of anyone involved in American art.<sup>15</sup> During that time, at least one seat was reserved for a sculptor, an important position as this member was regarded as the nation’s foremost expert in the medium. In 1946, this seat was occupied by sculptor Lee Lawrie.<sup>16</sup> Upon reading Larcade’s proposed bill, Lawrie scoffed at the amount of money proposed for the national monument. “Considering present prices for materials, wages for labor, and fees for sculptor and architect,” he wrote, “[\\$100,000] is not enough to create, design, and produce a great national monument to the men of the United States armed forces who fought, sacrificed, and won in the most terrible war in the history of the world.”<sup>17</sup> Lawrie was convinced that the bill would die, if only due to its inept calculation of finances.

Lawrie also cringed at the suggestion of using de Weldon’s copyist design for such an important commission. As the seated sculptor in the Commission of Fine Arts, Lawrie was

the barometer of good sculpture. His strength lay in his stylistic fluidity, as he was capable of making equally innovative sculpture in the styles of Gothic Revivalism and the more modern Art Deco. Lawrie was prolific in his sculptural production, but he remains best known for his work on the Nebraska State Capitol complex with Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. In his designs, Lawrie often worked to translate traditional styles into modern concepts for his contemporary audience, and the capitol buildings exemplify this approach with their Art Deco architectural forms infused with Gothic Revivalism sculpture (figure 6.3). For the innovative Lawrie, then, de Weldon’s proposal was a reduction, an imitation, or even a parroting—laughable at best, and at worst an insult. For the proposal at hand—a memorial to those who fought in World War II—Lawrie was of the same mind as Watson and recommended a national competition instead. In an effort to be fair to de Weldon, he outlined how, if in the context of the competition, “such a group made from the famous photograph of Joseph Rosenthal is the finest design in the competition, then it should receive the commission.”<sup>18</sup>

Lawrie most likely hedged his bets that de Weldon’s copy would never be selected as a winner in a national competition. During a historic moment in which, for many, the United States had *proven* its exceptionalism by defeating fascism in two theaters of war, artists were leaping at the chance to participate in depicting realistic portrayals of American valor. For example, in 1946 the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) began organizing the overseas American war cemeteries—14 different permanent burial sites for fallen Americans of World War II. Each cemetery had its own set of architect, artist and sculptor (all Americans). For artists, employment with the ABMC

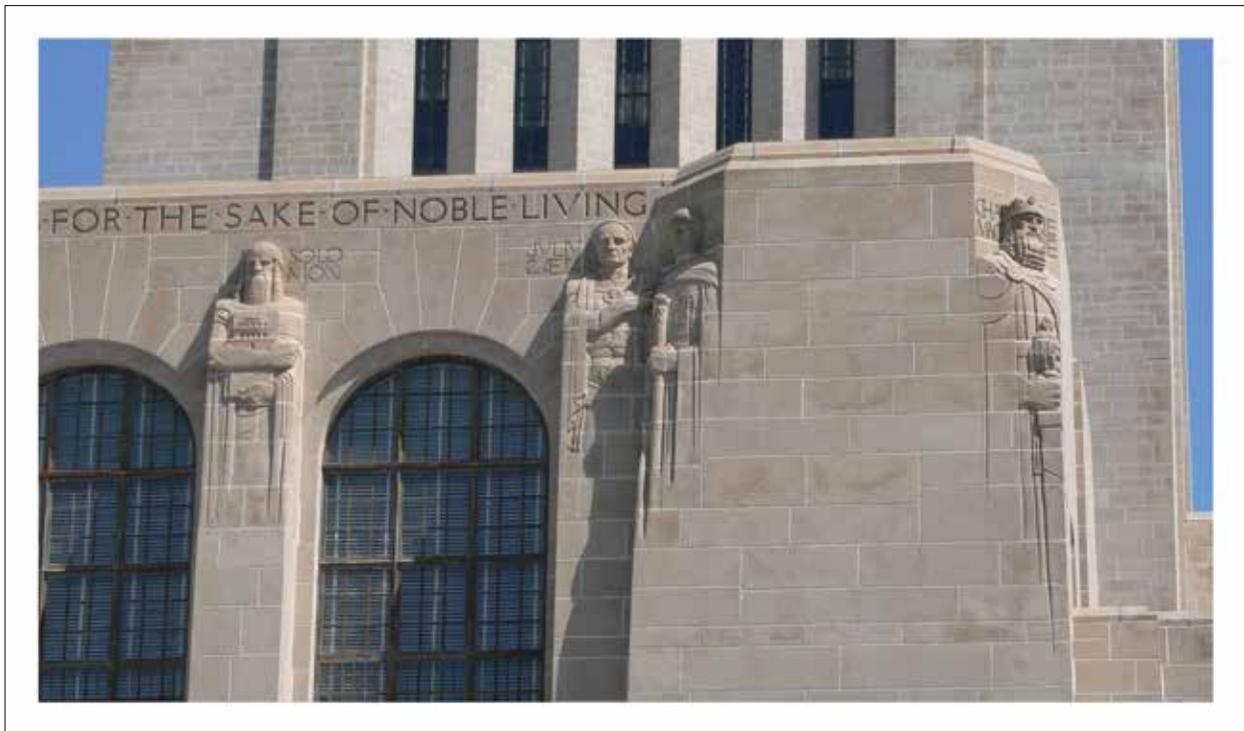


FIGURE 6.3

*Historical lawgivers (Solomon, Julius Caesar, Justinian and Charlemagne) adorn the south transept of the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln. The stylized figures were carved in Indiana limestone from a design by sculptor Lee Lawrie.*

Courtesy of Ammodramus

project was *the* job to get in the postwar period; yet, de Weldon was never considered seriously as a possible artist for this project, in part, because he was so loathed by the Commission of Fine Arts, which worked with the ABMC to select the artists.<sup>19</sup> First, de Weldon was foreign born, an outsider. And more egregiously, people found him a little suspect, particularly when he bragged that the British monarchy commissioned him to make portrait busts. Specifically, he claimed he was commissioned to create a bust of King George V to commemorate the 25th year of his reign; however, the bust, now located in the National Portrait Gallery, London, has the following notes from the registrar: “an Austrian sculptor executed an unauthorized bust of the King created from sketches of His Majesty taken whenever the King went

for a walk.”<sup>20</sup> De Weldon also asserted that he earned several advanced degrees, including a PhD in architecture from the University of Vienna. However, the university denied having had a de Weldon, although a “Felix Weiss” had attended classes between 1925 and 1930. De Weldon, people surmised, was a fake.

De Weldon’s proposed design for the war memorial also was perceived as copyist beyond the Commission of Fine Arts, which did not improve matters for him. The National Sculpture Society, the premiere professional organization of American sculptors based in New York City, immediately objected when they caught wind of the proposed design.<sup>21</sup> They felt it was derivative at best. Other professional societies felt similarly; all believed that no artist should be proud of a mere replica. The president of the

Artists' Guild, Robert F. Gates, wrote to the Commission of Fine Arts regarding the proposed war memorial. Like Watson, he protested the lack of a national competition for what was clearly going to be a major monument in Washington DC. Referring to de Weldon's design as a "posed tableau," Gates described how the "present design falls far short of the accepted principles of good sculpture, and that it is artistically unworthy of the idea it symbolizes."<sup>22</sup> Judging by how others disdainfully dismissed de Weldon and his design, Gates was being rather polite.

By early 1947, however, the Marine Corps League, an organization composed of Marine Corps veterans, had assumed responsibility for fundraising for the memorial.<sup>23</sup> Realizing that a monument featuring the flag raisers would not be accepted as one to commemorate only World War II, the league changed the proposal. The memorial would now be dedicated to the Marine Corps' dead from all wars—a smart political move, even if it meant narrowing the entire history of Marine Corps combat to one battle for the purpose of collective memory. Soliciting contributions from friends, members, and veterans of the Corps, in January 1947, the Marine Corps League had raised enough money to create a permanent and enlarged replica of de Weldon's temporary statue on Constitution Avenue.<sup>24</sup> Despite numerous objections, including those raised by organizations outside of the arts such as American University, in July 1947, Congress passed a proposed statute to raise funds for a Marine Corps War Memorial to be built on public grounds in the District of Columbia.<sup>25</sup> This meant a more prominent site (and a more expensive monument) than the previous location on Constitution Avenue.

Although sculptors and architects disdained the only design that the Marine Corps

League would consider—that by de Weldon—politicians like Larcade were eager for the votes of Marine Corps veterans, which in turn would support de Weldon as an artist and which far outnumbered those who objected.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, for de Weldon, the Marine Corps' sponsorship served as a lifeline. Without them, he never would have received a serious commission from the U.S. government during the immediate postwar period.

Even with the support of the Marine Corps League, however, the Commission of Fine Arts remained unconvinced that de Weldon's design was appropriate for a national monument and unanimously rejected it several times during the next five years. Citing the enormity of the monument—in its earliest proposed form, it reached a height of 100 feet and a diameter of 1,600 feet—the commission was able to stall the selection of the memorial's location. In late summer 1947, the Marine Corps League proposed Hains Point in East Potomac Park and liaison officers from the Marine Corps League pleaded with the commission to allow the construction to move forward. However, by September, it was not only the commission that thought the colossal statue a bad idea. Letters from the Civil Aeronautics Administration of the Washington National Airport, the Department of the Interior's National Park Service, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission all decried the magnitude of such a memorial.<sup>27</sup>

By November 1947, the top brass weighed in, applying pressure to the Commission of Fine Arts. Letters from Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan, the Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, and Marine Corps Commandant General Alexander A. Vandegriff all urged the Commission of Fine Arts to recommend a Marines Corps War Memorial to be built in Washington.<sup>28</sup> Members of the Commission

of Fine Arts soon found themselves reluctantly viewing scaled and full-size models of the proposed statue. Though the Commission of Fine Arts fully supported a memorial to the Marines, internal notes disparaged fine details such as the 18-inch-long fingers. Lawrie later observed to his colleagues, “I think the whole arrangement of the model with its ugly architecture is very poor. It has no design—everything is oval and fat.” He concluded, “The photograph of the Flag-raising is an appealing one, but that doesn’t mean it would assure good sculpture.”<sup>29</sup> The commission recommended another site be chosen, and again, reiterated their strong desire for a national competition to be held—hoping to get Felix de Weldon, the hack sculptor, fired from the commission.

Unable to get permission for their preferred design, the Marine Corps League let the matter lay dormant for a few years. They were in luck when changes in government favor toward the arts shifted in earnest after the “Truman Porch” scandal. Without the approval of the Commission of Fine Arts, in 1948, President Truman made unadvised changes to the second-floor balcony of the south portico of the White House. The Commission of Fine Arts responded negatively to the decision of the president, angering him. In 1950, President Truman appointed Felix de Weldon to the Commission of Fine Arts, replacing Lee Lawrie as the seated sculptor.<sup>30</sup> Truman liked de Weldon, who had designed his portrait bust in 1948. Furthermore, it had become clear that the commission’s members were giving themselves the best jobs in the ABMC’s overseas war cemeteries project, which Truman thought distasteful. After the nepotism was made public in the *New York Times*, the Commission of Fine Arts, and indeed, the way that the government commissioned art, needed a shake-up.<sup>31</sup> De

Weldon finally had hope that the commission would work with him, as only one of its former members in the commission remained. With new members, the Commission of Fine Arts finally considered in earnest the Marine Corps War Memorial proposal.

Finally, when the original architect of the memorial’s pedestal, Paul F. Jacquet, died in 1951, Edward F. Neild—a member of the commission—replaced him.<sup>32</sup> The remaining problem to resolve, the location of the memorial, was settled quickly after Neild and de Weldon joined forces. At some point between 1947 and 1951, the height of the monument was scaled back from 100 feet to its actual height of 78 feet (from bottom of pedestal to the top of the flagpole.) After rejecting a proposed location on the north end of Columbia Island on the Potomac River in 1951, finally in May 1952, a 27.5-acre plot known as Arlington Ridge (a.k.a the Nevius Tract) became the designated land for the construction of the memorial.<sup>33</sup> On 23 June 1953, the Commission of Fine Arts formally approved de Weldon’s design, permitting the construction of the Marine Corps War Memorial (figure 6.4).<sup>34</sup>

Thus, by mid-century, against all odds, sculptor Felix de Weldon realized his design for the Marine Corps War Memorial. Its successful construction resulted, in part, because de Weldon had become the darling of the Washington, DC, political elite. De Weldon’s portrait busts today can be regarded as a kind of network of the Truman presidency; likenesses include the president, John W. Snyder, Truman’s secretary of the Treasury, as well as such important naval figures as Admiral Raymond A. Spruance and Admiral Nimitz (figure 6.5). The Marine Corps War Memorial commission stood as the de facto *entrée* into the elite circles of Washington, DC, for de Weldon, whom art circles at the

time had doomed to remain forever an outsider. De Weldon had achieved the impossible.

## THE ROLE OF PORTRAITURE IN REMEMBRANCE

More than any other artist, the sculptor defined American patriotism of World War II in aesthetic terms, creating a visible record that matched the historic actions on Mount Suribachi. Yet today, as we look back on the Marine Corps War Memorial with contemporary eyes, we understand that de Weldon also committed a serious offense—he took part, albeit indirectly, in the misidentification of two Marines: Harold P. Keller and Harold Schultz. A portraitist conducts a close, intimate study of the physiognomy of a person in order to create a work of art. Was de Weldon really the amateur *poseur*, as his peers and critics would make him out to be? Or, was he committing himself to the service of the Marine Corps, foregoing individual specificity so that the flag raisers would be remembered not as distinct individuals, but as representatives of a greater whole?

In his monumental sculpture, de Weldon expressed a national purpose in a Cold War context. By imaging American heroism on a colossal scale, he created a remarkable solution for the expectation the American public had for a national monument dedicated to U.S. military service. Realism is the key word for understanding his approach. An important aspect of portrait making is to model from life, and as art historian Angela Rosenthal points out, it is even a “social encounter.”<sup>35</sup> In other words, the ways in which the artist and the sitter meet and interact with one another should be considered as part of the eventual portrait’s meaning. Not merely a tool of self-promotion, the portrait as a social encounter creates a lens



FIGURE 6.4

*MajGen Merritt A. Edson, USMC (Ret), president of the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation (left), and Gen Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, join in breaking ground for the Marine Corps War Memorial.*

Defense Department photo (Marine Corps) A400094, courtesy PFC Donald M. Sutton

into the larger historical, cultural, and political contexts of the period. Given that de Weldon relied on 1950s weapons and equipment when modeling the carbines, whose bayonet lug is different than what was true to the World War II versions, the portrait he created was not authentic to the moment it references, but rather a composite.<sup>36</sup>

The making of the Marine Corps War Memorial cost \$850,000, which was paid entirely through contributions by U.S. Marines, friends of the Corps, and members of the naval Service.<sup>37</sup> As is now well known, Corporal Harlon Block, Sergeant Michael Strank and Private First Class Franklin R. Sousley died fighting on the island of Iwo Jima after Rosenthal took his



FIGURE 6.5

*President Harry S. Truman poses with artist Felix de Weldon and the portrait bust made in his likeness, 7 January 1949.*  
Harry S. Truman Library, National Archives and Records Administration, courtesy Abbie Rowe

iconic photograph. For these three flag raisers, de Weldon made likenesses from photographs, again relying on physical verisimilitude as his principle approach. Following the practice of realism, for all the figures, he modeled the bodies on six men who posed in the nude. These same men also volunteered to reenact the flag raising so that de Weldon could make life studies from anatomical movement.<sup>38</sup> The three presumed flag raisers who survived the war—Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon, Private First Class Ira H. Hayes, and Navy corpsman

John H. Bradley—posed for the sculptor, who modeled their faces in clay (figures 6.6 and 6.7). De Weldon then made 36 studies of all sizes, including the large-scale plaster model. From this model, he cast 108 bronze pieces to create the monument we know today. The six male figures are each 32 feet in height, and weigh approximately 100 tons.<sup>39</sup> The colossal pieces had to be hauled by tractor trailers from the foundry in Brooklyn, and heavy machinery hoisted them into place on the pedestal (figure 6.8). The two rifles—an M1 Garand and M1



FIGURE 6.6

*To give his statue a realistic appearance, Felix de Weldon sculpted each figure from life or after photographs, as appropriate.*

*This photograph shows Rene Gagnon, survivor of the Battle of Iwo Jima, posing for the sculptor in 1945.*

Defense Department photo (Marine Corps) 313579

carbine—depicted in the sculpture measure 16 and 12 feet long; one canteen would hold 32 gallons of water.<sup>40</sup> De Weldon had created the largest bronze statue in the world.

In light of the recent identifications of the flag raisers Harold Schultz and Harold Keller, it is appropriate to query the place of portraiture in de Weldon's work. Indeed, there is a problem. If de Weldon was making such close studies of his subjects, as well as of Rosenthal's photograph, would he not have noticed some discrepancies in the clothing as well as in the likeness of Bradley or Gagnon? As recent re-

search has revealed, photographs of the men on Iwo Jima that day, along with forensic analysis, demonstrate that the gear Bradley wore was different from that worn by the man who was identified as Bradley in the photograph. Moreover, facial recognition technology used on the photographs indicated that the man on the far side of the flagpole was Keller and not Gagnon.<sup>41</sup> Why would de Weldon, whose merits in portraiture were solely based on his ability to accurately depict a likeness and, therefore, who undoubtedly noticed some of these discrepancies, keep his ideas to himself?

From the outset, the process to identify the flag raisers was rife with tension. The Huly Panel summarized that difficulty from their 2016 investigation: “Previous attempts to accurately identify the flag raisers . . . were complicated by the death of key participants, the stress of combat, the lack of recognition as to the significance of the second flag raising at the time of its occurrence, the haste to include the flag raisers in the 7th War Loan Drive, and the subsequent passage of time.”<sup>42</sup> Hayes had immediately raised objection to the identification of Hansen as a flag raiser, as he knew Block had been there. However, Hansen had already been identified as a flag raiser to the public. Around November 1946, Hayes reported that he was told by a higher ranking officer to “keep quiet” because a bond drive was about to begin.<sup>43</sup> Multiple inquiries then were performed, most notably the del Valle Board investigation in 1947 (see appendix A).

Throughout the inquiries, de Weldon kept a low profile. He needed this commission badly and he made serious financial investment into the project from 1946 to 1952, even as the Commission on Fine Arts contested his proposal.<sup>44</sup> By choosing to keep quiet, he also may have been responding to his employers—the Marine Corps League. This organization can be described as the culture makers of the Marine Corps, and no matter what, he needed to remain in their good graces. The members of the Marine Corps League felt that the iconic Rosenthal photograph, translated into a timeless memorial to honor the Marine Corps, would help relate the importance of the Corps, which was crucial in the late 1940s. As they were not particularly interested in artistic achievement, the fact that de Weldon copied an original work was not a matter of concern to the league. They instead focused on what they felt would best



FIGURE 6.7

*One of three busts by Felix Weiss de Weldon depicting PFC Ira Hamilton Hayes who assisted with raising the American flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, Volcanic Islands, on 23 February 1945. The series also contains portrait busts of PFC Rene Gagnon and PhM2c John Henry Bradley, USN. Sculpted from plaster with bronze patina, the busts measure respectively 14", 14" and 13" high.*

Courtesy Art Collection, National Museum of the Marine Corps

represent the Corps. As art historians Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall explain, the Marine Corps needed something to validate its very existence. “Since Andrew Jackson,” they write, “the Marines had survived eleven serious proposals to disband the Corps or to merge it with the Army.” Pointing out how, as late as 1944, Congress considered consolidating the armed forces, Marling and Wetenhall conclude that “not until passage of the National Security Act of 1947 was the issue resolved: Congress . . . affirmed the historic function of the Ma-



FIGURE 6.8

*Sculptor Felix de Weldon (lower left) watches as the final components of his statue are lifted into place. Figures were cast at a factory in Brooklyn and shipped on flatbed trucks to the memorial for assembly on-site.*

Defense Department photo (Marine Corps) A400903, courtesy Cpl Donald M. Sutton

rines as a distinct amphibious force.”<sup>45</sup> As long as the Marine Corps League favored de Weldon, he would not question the identification of John Bradley, or Henry O. Hansen, or Harlon H. Block, or anyone else.

De Weldon could not afford to lose the favor of the Marines, because he certainly did not have the support of the art world. Those in New York City loathed him even more than did his peers in Washington, DC. Even though the memorial received no federal funds, de

Weldon’s work served as a case of bad art for art critics, even long after it was dedicated. In 1955, art critic Charlotte Devree wrote an essay in *Art News* entitled, “Is this Statuary Worth More than a Million of Your Money?” Devree outlined how much money the federal government was spending on “bad” art, including the Marine Corps War Memorial by de Weldon, which she described as “artistically appalling.”<sup>46</sup>

In spite of the dismal critical reviews, the more important question is whether or not de

Weldon was in fact the hack everyone described. Art critics and cultural connoisseurs preferred abstraction, as exemplified by the work of the New York School—the so-called Abstract Expressionists of the late 1940s and 1950s such as Jackson Pollock. Ironically, de Weldon was adept in figurative abstraction. Once set loose from making a copy, he produced works that are more in the camp of modernism than traditionalism. For example, de Weldon's *Iron Mike* in Belleau Wood, also referred to as the Marine Corps War Memorial, demonstrates the artist's modernist hand (figure 6.9).

Dedicated in November 1955, this sculpture is located in the woods overlooking the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in France. In a larger-than-life scale, de Weldon's bronze relief rests on a granite slab that appropriately recalls a cenotaph.<sup>47</sup> The figure is presented over a plaque with a large Eagle, Globe, and Anchor and the pedestal holds a plaque with text in both English and French. The statue honors the 5th and 6th Regiments of the 4th Brigade (a World War I naming convention), whose men fought the now-famous battle in Belleau Wood for 20 days in June 1918. Because the Marines advanced through wheat fields and meadows only to enter a dense wood, where German emplacements were difficult to identify, the employed battle strategy was ineffective and the Americans sustained casualties of 8,100 officers and men during the intense fight.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, despite the brutal assaults on the Marines by German machine guns, snipers and artillery, the American forces won the battle. The victory is attributed to the bravery of the Marines, who often fought hand to hand or with bayonets.

De Weldon's memorial in Belleau Wood demonstrates his artistic talent. Far from strict realism, the sculpture gives an idea of the kind



FIGURE 6.9

*A picture of the Marine Corps War Memorial at Belleau Wood, taken at the monument's dedication on 18 November 1955.*

Defense Department photo (Marine Corps), courtesy SP-2 Martin Kondreck, USA

of character one needed either to have or to adopt in order to face the harsh realities of war. De Weldon was inspired by the impressive performance of the Marines in Belleau Wood, whom in the after action report Germans characterized as “vigorous, self-confident, and remarkable marksmen.”<sup>49</sup> Army General John J. Pershing, who lived in the cemetery quarters just below the wood for a time after the war (while secretary of the ABMC), described the Battle of Belleau Wood as “the most considerable engagement American troops had ever had with a foreign enemy.”<sup>50</sup> In this monument, de Weldon captured a sense of the warrior, as well as the grit that distinguishes the Marine Corps from other branches of the American

military. Unlike typical soldier statues, the memorial does not depict an inanimate soldier at rest. This Marine stealthily moves ahead, bayonet ready, with force and purpose though perhaps also hinting at the intimate circumstances of hand-to-hand combat. The heavily muscled figure is bent in his fearsome drive forward, actively working to move away from us, the viewer; the bronze bas-relief animates a soldier hunting down his opponent. This human body looks archaic and indeed, its actions demonstrate a basic survival instinct. When one looks at this sculpture, you can vividly imagine men like U.S. Marine Captain Lloyd W. Williams, who in the face of certain death said, "Retreat, hell! We just got here."<sup>51</sup>

De Weldon's *Iron Mike* sculpture embodies the fighting spirit of the Marines in a wild way that, in its vast stylistic opposition, complements the relative staid figures of the Marine Corps War Memorial in Virginia. In the tradition of the standing soldier memorials of the Civil War, the Hiker Memorials of the Spanish-American War of 1898, and the doughboys of World War I, a lone Marine stands for several battalions. Compared to the individualized six Marines of the memorial in Arlington Ridge, *Iron Mike* remains anonymous. Therein lies the tension of remembrance wrapped up in both memorials—be it six identifiable figures or one unknown, both represent hundreds of thousands of Marines. The two separate memorials signify the suffering of all Marines who overcame their foes, the battles, and the terrain. For each commission, de Weldon had to generalize, selecting what to remember—and what to forget. In the case of the Marines Corps War Memorial, he chose to subsume the individuality of the flag raisers in tribute to those Marines throughout history who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. In the

case of Belleau Wood, de Weldon focused instead on the ferocity of combat and the almost animal instinct one must have to survive. Yet, both communicate the central importance of these battles to the Marine Corps, despite their vast stylistic differences.

Tellingly, the divergent styles reveal the increasing pressure that the American military felt as the Cold War advanced. Located in eastern France, the Belleau Wood memorial's figure, with his reptilian-like spine hunched over as he runs forward, is anything but a dignified appraisal of soldiering. Why would such a reminder of scrappy, yet lethal, American militarism be suitable for a mostly French audience? In the 1950s, U.S. government officials were panicked over the increasing influence of Communism in France. From the late 1940s and on, the French government included a substantial number of Communists: in 1945, parliament consisted of 586 seats, of which 365, or 62 percent, were held by the *Parti Communiste Français*.<sup>52</sup> The Americans understood France to be the battleground of the most important ideological war of the mid-century; Western capitalism, officials argued, must prevail over eastern Communism—even if it came to war.<sup>53</sup> After French citizens witnessed the menacing physicality of the figure in Belleau Wood, how could they dismiss the possibility that the United States would not come back and sacrifice again for their capitalist ideology, since it had already—not once, but twice?

The 1954 dedication of the Marines Corps War Memorial likewise places that monument in a postwar context that helps illuminate exactly how it pays tribute to American heroism (figure 6.10). During the late 1940s and 1950s, the burgeoning Cold War and, specifically, the international threat of Communism captured the attention of U.S. military and political of-



FIGURE 6.10

*Thousands thronged to the site of the huge Marine Corps War Memorial, located next to Arlington National Cemetery, to witness the impressive dedication ceremony on 10 November 1954. The program featured a dedicatory address by Vice President Richard M. Nixon. The president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, likewise took time from his busy schedule to make an appearance on the speaker's platform.*

Defense Department Photo (Marine Corps) A401031B, courtesy MSgt H.B. Wells

ficials.<sup>54</sup> At a time when American citizens needed reassurance of U.S. military power, de Weldon translated Rosenthal's iconic photograph into a bronze phenomenon. In Arlington Ridge, visitors can move around the monument to see the figures more clearly, creating both a visual and interactive experience of the flag raising—an event much more convincing of American prowess than gazing at a still photograph. The monumental figures rise 32 feet in height—a scale similar to a four-story building—and the flag pole reaches nearly twice that at 60 feet. The towering scale impresses upon the viewer the magnitude of not only American heroism, but also American military strength. As such, the memorial has come to symbolize “The Good War,” through which the United States emerged as the global leader in the fight for freedom and democracy; its larger-than-life rendering of the flag raising proclaims the enduring strength and capability of the United States to persevere and triumph in the postwar era.<sup>55</sup>

In the wake of World War II, de Weldon made two figurative memorials that encapsulate Marine Corps identity and its influential legacy. Both works of art are figurative yet all individualizing details are removed, subsumed by their commemorative purpose in symbolizing the collective group. Character seems to be the real focus of the Marines Corps War Memorial—as it is in the *Iron Mike* statue in Belleau Wood. Anonymity thus serves the “common soldier” idea better than the portrait, a fact that Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert B. Neller articulated recently when he stated the Rosenthal image is “not about the individuals and never has been . . . simply stated, our fighting spirit is captured in that frame.”<sup>56</sup> With both memorials, de Weldon created visual statements that served collective memory

as well as American diplomatic missions in the Cold War.

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## ENDNOTES

The author would like to thank Breanne Robertson for her keen editorial eye, which helped improve this essay, as well as for her wonderful leadership in this book project.

1. The term *icon* refers to a symbol that represents something with a greater meaning. The power of the icon is how easily understood it is, the magnitude of its symbolism, and the timeliness of its meaning. In the case of Rosenthal's photograph, even the angle of the flag pole has become iconic such that it is recognizable even when abstractly quoted in architecture. See, for example, the roofline angle of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, VA. For a detailed examination of the process by which an image becomes an icon, see Austin Porter's essay in this volume.
2. See “Memorandum for the Director, Division of Public Information, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps,” 24 September 1946, in *Huly Board: Second Flag Raising on Iwo Jima* (Quantico, VA: Headquarters Marine Corps, 2016), Enclosure 2.
3. In some ways, the Marine Corps War Memorial acted as a precursor to the aesthetic argument over Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982) located in the National Mall, Washington, DC. See Rick Horowitz, “Maya Lin's Angry Objections, Vietnam Memorial Artist on Changes,” *Washington Post*, 7 July 1982, B-2, cols. 1–2; Sonia K. Foss, “Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” *Communication Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 326–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01463378609369643>; and Karal Ann Marling and Robert Silberman, “The Statue Near the Wall: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Art of Remembering,” *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 4–29.
4. In 1947, Congress finally passed the National Security Act, which preserved the Marines as a distinct amphibious force. Until then, the War Department had schemed to break the Marine Corps up into support units for the Army. See Aaron B. O'Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 98–147. See also Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 149–50.
5. H. R. 5521, 79th Cong., 2d Session (19 February 1946); and “Minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts, Washington D.C., From July 1 1945 to June 30, 1946,” Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, National Archives, hereafter Commission of Fine Arts minutes.
6. For de Weldon's claims, see Felix de Weldon, interviewed by Jerry N. Hess, 22 January 1969, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum, hereafter de Weldon interview.

7. When the United States declared war in 1941, de Weldon enlisted in the U.S. Navy.
8. De Weldon interview.
9. See “100,000 War Statue Proposed in House Bill,” *Washington Post*, 20 February 1946, 6.
10. Attorney General Tom C. Clark proposed the first Freedom Train in 1946 as a countrywide “museum on rails” tour to craft nationalism and bolster American patriotism. See Erik W. Christensen, *Channeling the Past: Politicizing History in Postwar America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); and David Mills’ chapter in this volume.
11. Forbes Watson, “Letter to the Editor: Flag Raising Statue,” *Washington Post*, 22 February 1946, 6.
12. The model of a national competition follows the Treasury Section of Painting and Sculpture for awarding commissions. Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall also trace the history of the debates over the design of the memorial. See Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 146–69.
13. Alexander C. Hoagland, “Letter to the Editor,” *Washington Post*, 22 February 1946, 6. For his biography, see Alexander C. Hoagland, “Veteran Tinge Invades Harvard Yard,” *Harvard Crimson*, 5 June 2000.
14. E. Harrison, “Letter to the Editor: Flag Raising Statue,” *Washington Post*, 3 March 1946.
15. In 1946–47, members of the Commission of Fine Arts were: Gilmore Clarke, chairman (landscape architect); David Finley, vice chairman (fine arts administrator); William T. Aldrich (architect), Maurice Sterne (painter), Frederick V. Murphy (architect), and L. Andrew Reinhard (architect).
16. Lawrie served with the commission in 1933–37 and 1945–50.
17. Lee Lawrie, quoted in letter from Gilmore D. Clarke to Fritz G. Lanham, Chairman of the Committee of Public Buildings and Grounds, House of Representatives, DC, 4 March 1946, Commission of Fine Arts minutes, hereafter Lawrie quote.
18. Lawrie quote.
19. The American war cemeteries were the first major postwar project coordinated by the American government. Similar to Washington, DC’s Federal Triangle (1926–31), the entire project was funded by tax payers. See Kate Clarke Lemay, *Triumph of the Dead: American World War II Cemeteries, Monuments, and Diplomacy in France* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2018).
20. See Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 270–71fn17–18. See also “Arlington Ridge Park Nomination, 2009, Arlington, Virginia,” Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 5 April 1996; and de Weldon interview. To see an obituary supporting de Weldon’s claims as true, see Dennis McLellan, “Felix de Weldon, 96; Sculptor of Famous Marines Corps War Memorial,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 June 2003.
21. See correspondence of Gilmore D. Clarke to Fritz G. Lanham, chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, House of Representatives, DC, 4 March 1946, Commission of Fine Arts minutes.
22. Robert F. Gates, letter from the Artists’ Guild of Washington to the Fine Arts Commission, 23 February 1947, Commission of Fine Arts minutes.
23. By 1955, the name Marine Corps League had changed to the Marine Corps Memorial Foundation, an organization that exists today. See “MCWFM History,” Marine Corps League, accessed 26 April 2017.
24. Frank Halford to Gilmore Clarke, 15 January 1947, Commission of Fine Arts minutes.
25. On 1 July 1947, President Truman approved Pub. L. No. 157, S.J. Res. 113 (1947), a joint resolution authorizing erection of a memorial to Marine Corps dead of all wars to begin at private expense on a site located on public grounds in DC.
26. For American University, see Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 22 February 1946, in which “Chairman Clark called attention to a letter of protest received from the American University against erecting the Memorial in Washington.” For the Marine Corps League’s insistence on Felix de Weldon’s design, only once did a resolution not mention de Weldon’s design around June 1947. See Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 19 June 1947.
27. Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 19 June 1947.
28. Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 25 November 1947.
29. Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 29–30 October 1947.
30. Truman did not reappoint conservatives Aldrich, Clarke, Lawrie, or Reinhard. Lee Grove, “Four Named to Arts Board,” *Washington Post*, 20 June 1950. See also, Anthony Leviero, “Truman Shakes Up Arts Commission,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1950; and Pietro Beluschì, interview with Meredith Clausen, 22 August–4 September 1983, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
31. See Aline B. Louchheim, “Memorials to Our War Dead Abroad,” *New York Times*, 15 January 1950. For a detailed study of nepotism in the midcentury art world and the resulting changes, see Lemay, *Triumph of the Dead*.
32. Neild served on the commission from 1950 to 1955. Due to clear favoritism arranging the best government art commissions to be given to members, a report on the situation was prepared by architect Elbert Peets and the head of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Lloyd Goodrich.
33. Pub. L. No. 157 authorized the construction of the memorial in Arlington, VA. For more on the Nevius Tract, see R. L. Denig to David Finley, 14 May 1952, Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 19 May 1952. For more information about the chronology of the various laws enabling the construction of the memorial, see Kay Fanning, *Arlington Ridge Park: Cultural Landscape Inventory, George Washington Memorial Parkway* (Washington, DC: NPS National Capital Regional Office, 2008).
34. Note, however, that the construction was held up once again, this time by the National Parks Service and the question of whether Arlington Cemetery needed the Nevius Tract for expansion as war dead were repatri-

- ated. Also, a Carillon Tower—a gift from the Netherlands acknowledging the help and assistance the United States gave the Dutch during and after World War II—further complicated the Arlington Ridge site as its relationship to the Marine Corps War Memorial had to be determined. Construction therefore did not begin until 1954 and moved quickly, as the memorial was dedicated in November. On the carillon tower, see Commission of Fine Arts minutes for 10 January 1952. Forty-nine of the carillon's 50 bells represent each of the Dutch provinces, along with the Antilles and Surinam (formerly Dutch Guyana). The last bell, installed in 1995, commemorates the 50th anniversary of the liberation. The Netherlands Carillon cost approximately \$1 million and it was designed by Dutch architect Joost W. C. Boks.
35. Angela Rosenthal, "She's Got the Look!: Eighteenth-Century Female Portrait Painters and the Psychology of a Potentially 'Dangerous Employment,'" in Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997), 147–66. Jennifer Van Horn also studies the "social encounter" in her essay "Prince Demah and the Profession of Portrait Painting," in Wendy Rick Reeves, ed., *Beyond the Face: New Perspectives on Portraiture* (London: D. Giles, 2018).
  36. Thank you to Breanne Robertson for pointing this detail out to the author. For more information detailing the discrepancy, see Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas, "Vietnam Veterans Memorial: 'Three Marines?,'" *Leatherneck*, January 2013, 29.
  37. Bernard C. Nalty and Danny J. Crawford, *The United States Marines on Iwo Jima: The Battle and the Flag Raisings* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Divisions, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1995), 30.
  38. See Rodney Hilton Brown, "The War Museum," 2012.
  39. This height is not the overall height of the monument mentioned earlier, which base to flagpole is 78 feet. Marling and Wetenhall write that there were 140 plaster pieces. See Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 166–67; and Nalty and Crawford, *The United States Marines on Iwo Jima*, 27.
  40. Nalty and Crawford, *The United States Marines on Iwo Jima*, 28.
  41. Michael S. Schmidt, "Man in Iwo Jima Flag Photo Was Misidentified, Marine Corps Says," *New York Times*, 23 June 2016. See also Mary Reinwald and Keil Gentry's chapters in this volume.
  42. See "Opinions," in *Huly Board*, 13.
  43. Ira Hayes to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, 10 December 1946, "Enclosure 2" from the del Valle Investigation Board, in *Huly Board*. In October 1946, Bradley also misidentified Hansen, which, in hindsight, raises questions about his credibility. See sworn testimony by John H. Bradley, 3 October 3, 1946, "Enclosure 2" from the del Valle Investigation Board, in *Huly Board*.
  44. "Sculptor Finances Iwo Statue, but GIs Donate Labor," *Washington Daily News*, 10 November 1945. Until his death in 2003, de Weldon recounted his own investments in nearly every interview he gave about the project.
  45. Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 149–50. See also O'Connell, *Underdogs*, 98–147; and David Mills' essay in this volume.
  46. Charlotte Devree, "Is This Statuary Worth More than a Million of Your Money?," *ARTNews* 54. no. 2 (April 1955), 35. As explained above, Devree's essay launched extreme challenges to the power wielded by the commission, resulting in several studies of government and art that, in turn, led to the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965. See Lemay, *Triumph of the Dead*.
  47. Reportedly, the black granite slab is the same material as that used for the pedestal of the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington. See Col Jay Bruder, "The Dedication of the Belleau Wood Memorial," *Marine Corps Gazette* 99, no. 11 (November 2015).
  48. Marine Corps casualties were the highest in the Service's history up to that date.
  49. 1stLt B. B. Breen, *2d Battalion, 5 Marines at Belleau Wood* (APO, Armed Forces Pacific: Project Leatherneck, 1994).
  50. Robert A. Ferree, "Retreat, Hell! We Just Got Here," American Legion, 11 December 2014.
  51. While attributed to Williams, the identity of the person who spoke these immortal words is not exactly clear. Ferree, "Retreat, Hell! We Just Got Here."
  52. The *Parti Communiste Français* continued to be major contender in politics in France through the 1970s, before falling behind the Socialist Party in the 1980s.
  53. See *European Recovery and American Aid: A Report by the President's Committee* (Washington, DC: Secretary of Commerce, 1947), C13. This document served as the foundational report for the Marshall Plan (European Recovery Program).
  54. Indeed, the Warsaw Pact was signed in 1955, which created a security alliance between Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union to counterbalance that of NATO.
  55. The phrase "The Good War" was coined by Studs Terkel. See Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
  56. Office of the U.S. Marine Corps Communication, Headquarters Marine Corps, "USMC Statement on Iwo Jima Flag Raisers," press release, 23 June 2016.

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# ANOTHER COUNTRY'S FLAG, ANOTHER COUNTRY'S SERVICEMEN

## *Rosenthal's Photograph and Commemoration of the U.S. Marine Corps in Australia and New Zealand*

*by John Moremon, PhD*

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The waterfront of New Zealand's capital city, Wellington, has altered in shape and form since World War II. Much of the area where *wharfies* (or stevedores) and other dockside workers labored is now a recreational, arts, sporting, and cultural heritage precinct. From the waterside promenade, the harbor resembles a large inland lake. Its entrance to the sea is hidden behind the farthest of two peninsulas that jut out toward the center. At intervals, a container ship, cruise liner, or one of the ferries that link the country's North Island and South Island will materialize from behind the far peninsula or, after sailing, disappear from view. There are few obvious reminders of the wartime history of this working harbor; however, near the base of a pedestrian bridge that leads back toward the central business district, two plaques announce that Marines passed this way (figures 7.1a and 7.1b). One explains their presence: "THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS ARRIVED AT THIS QUAY IN MAY 1942 AND LEFT HERE TO SERVE IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE OF WAR." The other carries the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor; the motto, *Semper*

*Fidelis*; the shield of the 2d Marine Division, whose association organized for the plaques to be erected; and a pledge: "TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND. IF YOU EVER NEED A FRIEND, YOU HAVE ONE."<sup>1</sup>

The memorial erected by the 2d Marine Division Association in far-off Wellington reminds us that the island-hopping campaign, a part of which Associated Press photographer Joseph Rosenthal photographed, started a long way south of Iwo Jima.<sup>2</sup> Of the nine Allied countries represented at the surrender ceremony on USS *Missouri* (BB 63) in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945, two countries—New Zealand and Australia—had hosted U.S. Marines in the earliest days of the Pacific War.<sup>3</sup> American forces began arriving in the South Pacific countries toward the end of 1941 (Australia) and early 1942 (New Zealand). These included the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions, both of which trained in New Zealand before fighting on Guadalcanal. Afterward, the 2d Marine Division recuperated in New Zealand, a duty station that Richard W. Johnston, a war correspondent assigned to the division, later described as "the



FIGURES 7.1A/7.1B

*The U.S. Marine Corps memorial in Wellington commemorates the arrival of the U.S. Marine Corps to New Zealand. Although the plaque states this event happened in May 1942, the first Marines actually disembarked in Auckland on 12 June and Wellington on 14 June. The plaque is located on a wall bordering Frank Kitts Park on the Wellington waterfront.*

Courtesy of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, New Zealand

land they adored.”<sup>4</sup> The 1st Marine Division meanwhile spent time in Australia, and in the process, adopted the quintessential Australian folk song “Waltzing Matilda” as a battle hymn. Both divisions incorporated into their shields the Southern Hemisphere’s prominent constellation, the Southern Cross, under which they trained and, until 1944, fought (figure 7.2). The 3d Marine Division also spent several weeks in New Zealand in 1943, but it was not in the country long enough to develop the same affection for “the land of the long white cloud”—a popular translation of Aotearoa, the indigenous Māori name for New Zealand.

The plaques that form the Wellington memorial highlight the fact that, in the transnational memory of the Pacific War, each country has chosen which events to emphasize in their

remembrance and likewise which events to forget. The American focus on the Iwo Jima flag raising, as captured in Rosenthal’s Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph, has the effect of foregrounding U.S. fighting in the Pacific War, while at the same time obscuring Allied participation. The photograph remains one of a small number of images from the American experience that dominate popular memory of the conflict. British historian Ashley Jackson suggests that photographic images of American warships burning at Pearl Harbor, kamikaze attacks against American warships, U.S. Marines raising the Stars and Stripes over Mount Suribachi, and the American-made atomic mushroom cloud towering over Hiroshima, Japan, gives the impression that “America is the Allied war effort in the Pacific.”<sup>5</sup> This notion

has been reinforced by Hollywood portrayals of the Pacific War as an American-Japanese conflict. And yet, while the U.S. Marine Corps had a wartime presence in New Zealand and Australia, their presence is not at the forefront of either country's historical memories of the conflict. Many Wellingtonians walk, jog, or cycle past the two Marine Corps plaques without realizing their significance.

In New Zealand and Australia, memory of World War II is shaped by factors that might not be familiar to Americans, including the greater emphasis both give to memory of World War I, their divergent experiences during World War II, their perspectives of American strategy in the Pacific during and after the war, and their reactions to the postwar ascendancy of the United States as a world power. The longstanding neglect by American commentators about Australia and New Zealand's participation in the Pacific War, and especially their cooperation with U.S. forces, likewise has had a profound effect on local perceptions of Rosenthal's photograph. While ubiquitous in the United States from 1945 to the present, the Iwo Jima image, both in its original form and in parody, has emerged more recently in Australia and New Zealand as a shorthand symbol connoting American dominance in global popular culture rather than conjuring nostalgia toward the American servicemen who fought in the Pacific. Even when American forces, including Marines, are commemorated in the two countries, Rosenthal's image plays no particular part in the memorial activities. Instead, the commemoration of the U.S. Marine Corps is driven by the wartime interaction between Marines and civilians on the two countries' home fronts. Exploring the reception of Rosenthal's photograph, *Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima* (1945), in these Allied nations permits a



FIGURE 7.2

*The 1st Marine Division shoulder patch originally was authorized for wear by members of units who served with or were attached to the division in the Pacific during World War II. The blue diamond insignia commemorates the division's victory in the Battle of Guadalcanal.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo

better understanding for why American memory of the Pacific theater—constructed around this image—is not, and can never be, universally applied (see figure 0.2).

## NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, AND AMERICAN FORCES DURING THE PACIFIC WAR

As part of the British Empire, Australia and New Zealand both followed Great Britain in declaring war against Germany on 3 September 1939. They were committed to the European war but also anticipated a war with Japan, which had already invaded China and harbored further imperial aspirations to conquer territories in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific.<sup>6</sup> The common fear was that Japan would take advantage of the distraction of a large-scale war in

Europe to launch its own attacks in the region, including against Australia and New Zealand. When this did not eventuate in the first weeks of World War II, the two countries sent infantry divisions to the Middle East and agreed to contribute to the Empire Air Training Scheme, which provided aircrews mainly for the air war in Europe.<sup>7</sup> Australia deployed naval forces to the Mediterranean as well. At the same time, both countries took the precaution of strengthening home and regional defenses. In 1940, New Zealand sent a modest force to Fiji and accelerated the training of militia forces at home. Australia meanwhile stepped up its militia training and, in addition, deployed forces to northern Australia, Singapore, New Britain, and Papua and pledged to assist in the defense of the Netherlands (Dutch) East Indies.<sup>8</sup>

After Japan entered the war on 8 December 1941, New Zealand and Australia took different paths toward victory.<sup>9</sup> New Zealand further bolstered its home defenses, but it stayed committed primarily to the European theater, deploying only modest forces in the South Pacific. With Great Britain unable to come to their aid in the event of an enemy attack, Australians were rattled—even showing signs of panic—given that their country was closer to the Southeast Asian and Pacific territories that the Japanese conquered in succession. By early 1942, Prime Minister John Curtin had recalled the bulk of Australian land and naval forces from the Middle East. He also famously declared that “Australia looks to America, free of any pang as to our traditional ties or kinship with the United Kingdom.”<sup>10</sup> Australian historian Joan Beaumont observes that Curtin’s declaration “did not herald a ‘turning point’ in Australian foreign policy as has sometimes been claimed,” but that it did strain wartime relations with Britain.<sup>11</sup>

In truth, Australians and New Zealanders all “looked to America” because they well knew that the United States had a significant interest in the Pacific and could deploy sizable forces into the theater. Great Britain, on the other hand, was tied down by the war against Germany and, following the fall of Singapore in February 1942, it had to use the comparatively small forces it deployed to the Asia-Pacific to hold onto the remaining colonial possessions in Southeast Asia, namely Burma and India. The two South Pacific allies meanwhile were reassured when U.S. naval, land, and air forces began arriving in late 1941. The United States initially had not planned to send forces to either country, but the stunning Japanese advances in the first months of the Pacific War left them no choice. In quick succession, the Japanese overran Hong Kong, Guam, Wake Island, Singapore, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines, and New Britain.

Historian Edward J. Drea compares the wartime partnership between the United States and Australia to “a shotgun wedding”; the same analogy could be used for the American alliance with New Zealand.<sup>12</sup> In early 1942, the South Pacific was divided into two American-commanded strategic areas: the Southwest Pacific Area, commanded by Army General Douglas MacArthur, with a base in Australia; and the South Pacific Area, initially commanded by Navy Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, with a base in New Zealand. Marines sent to the region in early 1942 were allocated to the South Pacific Area. New Zealand’s official history of World War II characterizes the sudden U.S. presence in 1942 as the “American invasion.”<sup>13</sup> In the two or three areas of New Zealand’s North Island, where American servicemen were concentrated, they offered reassurance—supplying a trained and well-armed

force for local defense—and they influenced both the social scene and economy. Young Marines in their smart uniforms certainly were capable of turning heads, particularly those of young women. The Americans brought a touch of Hollywood to the remote South Pacific country. They were comparatively well paid, generally well-mannered, curious about the country and its culture, and keen to form social connections whenever possible.<sup>14</sup>

Small advance parties of U.S. Marines arrived in New Zealand in May 1942, and then the 1st Marine Division disembarked at Wellington a month later, to be followed thereafter by the 2d Marine Division. Some units, meanwhile, disembarked at Auckland, the major city in the north of the North Island. A Marine Corps combat cameraman who landed at Wellington later recalled that the small capital city seemed “somewhat dismal,” having suffered recent damage from a minor earthquake.<sup>15</sup> His impression also reflected the fact it was the middle of the Southern Hemisphere’s winter, a time when the aptly nicknamed “Windy Wellington” is frequently wind and rain swept. This was certainly not the tropical climate that Marines may have imagined. Most who landed at Wellington were taken north to the Kāpiti Coast, where large camps were established around the townships of Paekākāriki and Paraparaumu. Other than the fact it was not tropical, this area offered reasonably good grounds for training, with access to beaches for amphibious exercises and access on the inland side of the coastal plain to bush and timber-clad hillsides that served as preparation for fighting in jungle terrain (figure 7.3). By July, the Marines had embarked again, this time for further training in amphibious operations on tropical islands before the battle at Guadalcanal.<sup>16</sup>

As was the case in other countries where

Americans landed in 1942–43, New Zealanders joked that Americans were “over-paid, over-sexed, and over here.”<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, friendships and relationships—many of which lasted a lifetime—were formed. Evidence of shared social experiences and emotional attachments included hundreds of weddings between servicemen and New Zealand women, as well as children fathered by American servicemen both in and out of wedlock (figure 7.4). Later, after the Marines had seen action, memorial notices served as poignant reminders of the impression they had made, such as a simple notice in Wellington’s *The Evening Post* shortly after the war ended: “LOWE, J., USMC—In proud and loving memory of PFC [Private First Class] John Lowe, killed in action on Tarawa, November 20, 1943, loved grandson of Mrs Gayton, of Cartersville, Georgia. Semper Fidelis. Inserted by his dear friend, Sybil.”<sup>18</sup>

The 2d Marine Division’s return to New Zealand in 1943, after the battle on Guadalcanal, renewed that relationship there. While there were tensions at times, including fights between New Zealand and American servicemen, the wartime relationship appears to have been cordial on the whole. The Americans’ presence was reported to be a factor in strengthening U.S.-New Zealand foreign relations. In April 1943, the New Zealand government publicized a letter sent by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Prime Minister Peter Fraser in which Roosevelt expressed his appreciation for the “cordial hospitality to our American soldiers, sailors, and marines. The result is already the basis of a greater friendship and understanding in the future than we have ever had before.”<sup>19</sup> The Marines’ presence was especially marked at the local level. New Zealanders observed that Marines made an effort to be community members, if only for a time. They demonstrat-



FIGURE 7.3

*A shore party, consisting of the first wave of 8th Marines to make a landing, secures the beach at Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, during maneuver exercises held there in 1943.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy Julian C. Smith Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division



FIGURE 7.4

*A Marine wedding in New Zealand, ca. 1943. At the end of the war, as many as 1,500 New Zealand and 15,000 Australian war brides journeyed to the United States.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy Earl Wilson Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

ed respect toward their hosts including, on 25 April 1943, participating in Anzac Day services and parades to honor the soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), who had landed at Gallipoli, Turkey, on 25 April 1915.<sup>20</sup> The residents of a beachside township north of Wellington also praised the efforts of Marines who pitched in to fight a small bushfire that threatened houses. As one resident explained to a reporter, “No one, as far as I know, asked their help; they did not wait to be asked.”<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, many New Zealanders, because of the relationships formed as well as a natural interest in events in their own part of the world, continued to follow the progress of the Marines as they advanced toward

the Japanese mainland. Newspapers reported on American battles and showed photographs of American soldiers fighting in the Pacific, as well as reporting on events worldwide. While this was partly due to the American press offices supplying the New Zealand press with copy, there also must have been editorial decisions that stories about U.S. Marines were of interest to readers. As U.S. forces closed on Japan, reports of American actions continued to appear in newspapers and cinema newsreels. For example, on 11 July 1944, the *Auckland Star* reported that Marines who had “stormed ashore” at Saipan the month before were now “masters of the island,” having achieved “a smashing blow at the front gate of Japan’s domestic garden.” Casualty figures were not given but the report, emanating from American sources, made it apparent that the fight had been costly, with the battle said to be “the hardest the marines have known in the Pacific war, except possibly the battle for Tarawa.”<sup>22</sup>

As was the case in New Zealand, the presence of U.S. Marines in Australia during 1943 would have been most noticeable in a few select areas. After Guadalcanal, the 1st Marine Division was sent to a camp outside the northern city of Brisbane, but after a few weeks, it moved again to the southern state of Victoria. This area was more suitable for soldiers recovering from service in the tropics. Australian journalist Frank Dexter recalled that there was no publicity regarding the Marines’ arrival, “but when suddenly strange American uniforms began to appear on Melbourne streets we began to take notice. That insignia on their caps was different from anything we had seen. The globe, an anchor, and an eagle. They must be marines.”<sup>23</sup> The Marines spent approximately six months in Australia before fighting at Cape Gloucester on the island of New Britain. The

1st Marine Division’s brief presence in Australia and its contribution to MacArthur’s advance in the Southwest Pacific meant its actions on New Britain were widely reported in the Australian press. However, the Marines were never the primary story. Australians mainly followed their own troops’ campaigns in New Guinea, which was an Australian-governed territory.

Strategic decisions, national culture, and memory all influenced American relationships with Australia and New Zealand during the war. However, while the Americans had been viewed as possible saviors in 1942, the wartime relationship was less rosy by 1945. Even before the war ended, it was apparent in Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand that the United States remained intent on playing the primary role both in the isolation and defeat of Japan and in shaping the postwar Pacific. Specifically, American strategy seemed to be geared toward reducing the British Empire’s influence in the Asia-Pacific and weakening its role in the peace settlement with Japan. As historian P. G. A. Orders observes, the upshot was that “the British Commonwealth played a peripheral role in the final phase of the Pacific war.”<sup>24</sup> The British Pacific Fleet, to which both New Zealand and Australia contributed warships, supported U.S. Navy Fleet operations shortly before the Battle of Iwo Jima, but this was really the only tangible contribution the two countries made to the main drive toward Japan.

By early 1945, American forces had advanced beyond the immediate areas of both New Zealand and Australia, and the close relationships forged in 1941–43 were showing signs of strain. In Australia, for example, there was a growing sense of frustration concerning MacArthur’s employment of Australian forces.<sup>25</sup> While the Australian government remained committed to the Pacific War, Mac-

Arthur effectively marginalized its forces, which were increasingly relegated to operational backwaters to conduct “mopping-up” campaigns in bypassed areas of New Guinea, Bougainville, New Britain, and Borneo. These campaigns cost the Australians hundreds of casualties but contributed little to the defeat of Japan or the larger war effort.<sup>26</sup> A further source of irritation was what Australians perceived as American-biased press reporting. MacArthur’s headquarters controlled the release of war correspondents’ reports and press releases relating to the Southwest Pacific Area. It seemed that MacArthur was intent on downplaying the Australian contribution to the war and limiting news reports concerning Australian actions. Indeed, so few reports of Australian fighting appeared in Australian newspapers at one stage in early 1945 that an Australian general complained: “The Australian public must be wondering whether we are still in the war.”<sup>27</sup> Interest in the American island-hopping campaign remained strong, as it was apparent that this drive was putting pressure on Japan, but MacArthur’s control of press stories in the Southwest Pacific influenced how some American stories would be received.

## ROSENTHAL’S PHOTOGRAPH IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

The American seizure of Iwo Jima was part of the overall island-hopping campaign strategy that U.S. leadership considered vital to winning the war but, at the same time, deemphasized Allied decision making and participation, in contrast to operations in Europe where consensus and compromise were necessary components of a truly Allied advance into Germany. Australians and New Zealanders first learned about Iwo Jima as a wartime objective in June

and July 1944, just seven months before the main battle, when newspapers began running stories about American bombing raids against the island. Reports of intensified bombardment in early February 1945 led to conjecture in the press that the Japanese stronghold would soon be invaded. In both countries, reporting of the protracted island-hopping campaign made clear that the United States was shouldering much of the burden in the advance toward Japan. The heavy casualties Americans suffered on Tarawa, Saipan, Guam, and Peleliu received sympathetic coverage in both countries, and on 20 February 1945, Australian and New Zealand radio stations and newspapers delivered detailed reports on the U.S. amphibious landing at Iwo Jima the previous day. Most stories emphasized Marine Corps involvement and predicted another hard battle ahead. *The Auckland Star*, for instance, reported that Marines stormed ashore “as the tiny island rocked under the heaviest naval bombardment of the Pacific war.”<sup>28</sup>

Reports of a flag raising on Iwo Jima were conveyed to Australia and New Zealand on the day of the event, 23 February 1945. However, by the time the press release from the naval public affairs office at Guam arrived in the two countries, only a handful of newspapers in the western half of the Australian continent had time to insert the story. Adelaide’s *The News* included a 34-word piece on the front page of its evening edition. Filling a space reserved for stories received at the last minute, the notice reported: “IWO JIMA SUCCESS. New York. —U.S. marines have planted their flag at top of Mount Suribachi, Jap stronghold at southern tip of Iwo Jima. Japs [Japanese] are still holding out in mountains, caves, and tunnels.”<sup>29</sup> Longer reports appeared in both countries’ newspapers the next day. Melbourne’s *The Argus*, for exam-

ple, dramatized the event, noting that Marines had surrounded Mount Suribachi and “moved up the cliffs under attack by enemy hand grenades and demolition charges” until “the Americans had raised the flag on the peak.”<sup>30</sup>

Some newspapers in Australia and New Zealand showed images of Iwo Jima. *The New Zealand Herald*, for example, published a photograph on 22 February 1945 that had been taken from the air during an air raid some months earlier.<sup>31</sup> Australians and New Zealanders were further assisted in their understanding of the battle for Iwo Jima and, by extension, the flag raising by comparison with a key battle in their nations’ recent history: Gallipoli. Gallipoli was the peninsula in Turkey on which the ANZAC soldiers had landed on 25 April 1915. This battle provided a foundation story for Australians and New Zealanders who shared a belief that the spilling of blood demonstrated their maturation as nations of the British Empire. Recited every year on Anzac Day, the story of Gallipoli was so well known by 1945 that any reference to the 1915 battle would have been immediately understood by readers in the two countries. *The Daily News* in Perth, Western Australia, informed its readers that Iwo Jima’s terrain was “suggestive of Gallipoli,” while *The New Zealand Herald* proclaimed: “COUNTRY LIKE GALLIPOLI. AMERICAN CASUALTIES FAIRLY HIGH.”<sup>32</sup> The comparison with Gallipoli represented a way of explaining the current U.S. battle to readers who were intimately familiar with the history of the 1915 campaign—including veterans who had fought there—and served to create an imagined terrain at Iwo Jima. There is no doubt that the linking of the two battles also served as an accolade for the Marines. Possibly the most deferential piece of writing in this period appeared in an Australian regional newspaper, whose editor suggested

that the flag raising on Iwo Jima was a sign that victory in the Pacific was more or less assured:

*The struggle of the gallant marines to gain a foothold, their storming of the heights under ferocious fire, the heavy casualties and, above all, the indomitable courage of the invading troops are all reminiscent of the epic landing of the Anzacs [at Gallipoli] nearly thirty years ago. . . . Each yard is bitterly contested, the Japs [Japanese] are defending “to the last drop of their blood.” . . . Latest reports indicate that the immortal marines have hoisted their flag on the summit of Mt. Suribachi. That ceremony accomplished with great mortality spells death and destruction to Japanese cities and war industries.*<sup>33</sup>

While the flag raising on Iwo Jima was widely reported, Rosenthal’s photograph was not made available to the press in Australia and New Zealand with the same speed as it was offered in the United States. The two countries’ press organizations did not have ready access to the photographs, including Rosenthal’s image, that had been issued to press organizations at the time.<sup>34</sup> It is possible that some Australians and New Zealanders saw the image in imported publications of American origin. However, for most on the South Pacific home fronts, the first published photograph of any flag fluttering over Mount Suribachi was the image captured by Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery, which showed the first flag to be raised that day (see figure 0.3). Lowery’s photograph was supplied to the press in both countries by the U.S. naval public affairs office on Guam, and, of critical importance, the image was of a form acceptable for publication in both countries, where government-produced propaganda and wartime censorship worked together to present the public with a sanitized

visual representation of the war.<sup>35</sup> Newspapers therefore reported that the Americans suffered heavy casualties on Iwo Jima, but generally they could not show the war dead or serious casualties. Lowery's photograph aligned with this journalistic approach, since it alluded to the danger and stresses of battle, particularly with "the grim-faced marine in the foreground," yet also served as evidence of the American success in driving back the Japanese with his comrades' hoisting of the Stars and Stripes in the background.<sup>36</sup> It was important for the war-weary public of both countries to see the evidence of victory. While Rosenthal's photograph also would have met the criteria for publication in the two countries, and conveyed an equally positive message about the battle, it was simply not available at the time.

By the time Rosenthal's photograph of the second flag raising appeared in newspapers in Australia and New Zealand, readers viewed the image as a historical one instead of as a depiction of a contemporary event. The main news stories of May 1945, when Rosenthal's photograph was first published in the area, included the end of the war in Europe and the exposed horrors of the Holocaust; the American battle on Okinawa, which had started the month before; air raids on the Japanese mainland; kamikaze attacks against Allied warships; the close of the Philippines campaign; and the start of the final campaign by Australian forces in Borneo. The flag-raising photograph was therefore presented to audiences in Australia and New Zealand not as war news but as cultural news because by then the Associated Press photographer had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize. One of the earliest mentions of the photograph appeared on 9 May 1945 when a Tasmanian newspaper, Launceston's *The Examiner*, explained that

Rosenthal had received the prestigious award "for a photograph of Marines raising the US flag on Iwo-Jima"; yet, the photograph itself was not shown.<sup>37</sup> Sydney's *The Sun* likewise explained to readers on 13 May 1945 that Rosenthal's photograph had "quickly become one of the most famous and most widely publicised [*sic*] photographs of the war, winning the Pulitzer Prize for photography."<sup>38</sup> Two weeks later, Melbourne's *The Advocate* published the "remarkable and now famous photograph" with an editorial comment that it was "an astonishingly perfect picture in design" and had already sold 7 million copies.<sup>39</sup> Australia's *The Catholic Weekly* chose to highlight that Rosenthal was a convert to Catholicism.<sup>40</sup>

The three-month delay between publication of the photograph in the United States and its publication down under was one reason why Rosenthal's memorable image could never have the same meaning to Australians and New Zealanders as it did for Americans. For Americans, the image had been a record of an ongoing battle; for Australians and New Zealanders, it was from the outset a record of a historical event. Also missing was the emotion associated with seeing one's own troops and flag. Moreover, there is a distinct possibility that Australians and New Zealanders were less enamored with flag imagery in general. In six years of war, neither country produced a celebrated image that centered on a flag—certainly none with the meaning of Rosenthal's *Old Glory* or Yevgeny Khaldei's photograph of the Soviet flag being unfurled over the ruins of the Reichstag. Australia's most celebrated battle during World War II was on the Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea in 1942, and the imagery associated with this battle is of the muddy mountain track along which men fought and died. When the village of Kokoda

was recaptured in November 1942, an Australian flag was dropped from an aircraft, but the flag is barely discernible in the one well-known photograph of the flag-raising ceremony (figure 7.5). Brisbane's *The Courier-Mail* printed the photograph of the ceremony at Kokoda on its front page with a bland explanation that directs the eye away from the barely moving flag in the background, noting that the "picture shows Australian troops, in full kit, at the ceremony."<sup>41</sup>

This apparent disinterest in flag imagery could be explained by the fact that Australians and New Zealanders maintained a dual allegiance and, accordingly, two flags were important to them. Being subjects of the British Empire, they possessed both imperial and national identities. Great Britain's Union Jack held meaning—positive and negative—to people in both countries, and the British emblem was incorporated into the designs for their own national flags. In addition, national culture ensured that displays of patriotism were muted. Historians Warren Pearson and Grant O'Neill note that Australians, for example, traditionally are not good at, or comfortable with, articulating national identity or expressing national pride. They developed an "aversion to flag waving" that has only started to be relaxed in recent decades.<sup>42</sup> Australia's *Newcastle Sun*, therefore, adopted a mocking tone when reporting that Rosenthal's photograph had caused "flag raising fever" among American generals. The newspaper quoted a *New York Times* correspondent's view that "Joe Rosenthal made our generals flag-raising conscious and now they want to plant Stars and Stripes on every hill-top taken by our sweating, bleeding infantry with photographers there to record the scene for posterity."<sup>43</sup>

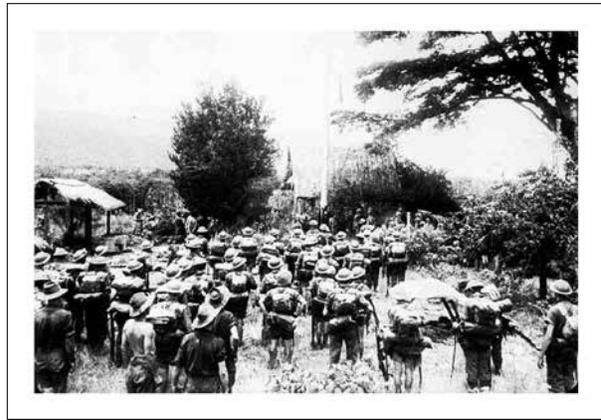


FIGURE 7.5

*On 3 November 1942, the Maroubra Force commander, Australian Army MajGen George A. Vasey, marked the recapture of Kokoda with a flag-raising ceremony witnessed by the 25th Australian Infantry Brigade. Today, monuments commemorating the soldiers from both sides line the plateau edge.*

Photo courtesy of J. Earl McNeil,  
Australian Department of Information

## ROSENTHAL'S PHOTOGRAPH AND U.S. MARINE CORPS MEMORIALS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Two months after the end of World War II, an anonymous writer to Wellington's *The Evening Post* proposed that the New Zealand government or Wellington City Council should construct "a memorial to the gallant men of the United States Marine Corps who for a time were stationed in our midst and to whom we owe so much for keeping the Japanese at a safe distance from our shores."<sup>44</sup> The only memorial to the Marines at the time was the colors of the 2d Marine Division and an American flag hanging inside St Paul's Cathedral in Wellington. These had been presented to the cathedral during the war; and they remain hanging in the cathedral to this day.

While there was little appetite in New Zea-



FIGURE 7.6

*Queen Elizabeth II unveiling the inscription and wreath on the newly completed Australian-American Memorial in Canberra, 16 February 1954.*

P. M. Hamilton Collection, National Library of Australia

land for a national memorial to Allied forces, Australia's different wartime experience meant that it was willing not only to remember its relationship with the United States during the Pacific War but also to accommodate a memorial to that relationship. After World War II, the American influence in the Asia-Pacific had caused tensions within the British Empire; but as the Cold War showed signs of heating up, the United States was viewed more as a "great and powerful friend."<sup>45</sup> Following the signing of the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) in 1951, the Australian-American Association promoted the building of a memorial in the nation's capital,

Canberra.<sup>46</sup> The monument was dedicated by Queen Elizabeth II during her first tour to Australia in 1954 (figure 7.6). For various reasons, this memorial has failed to resonate with Australians, and it never became an active "site of memory." Historian and cultural commentator Joan Beaumont suggests this is because the events of World War II, and therefore the wartime relationship between the United States and Australia, "slipped quickly from the calendar of national ritual—and, it would seem, cultural memory."<sup>47</sup>

Even with some adjustments within the milieu of the Cold War, the memory of the U.S. Marine Corps' wartime presence in New Zealand and Australia tended to be very localized. The 2d Marine Division Association's memorial at Wellington established the harbor as a site of memory for the Marines themselves. In the early 1950s, the association placed its plaques at the entrance to Aotea Quay, where the Marines had disembarked and embarked; the plaques were later stored and then moved to their current position when the foreshore was redeveloped. The other notable memorial to the Marine Corps in New Zealand also dates to the early 1950s. The New Zealand-American Association funded memorial gates at the entrance to Queen Elizabeth Park, a nature reserve outside Paekākāriki. The stated purpose of the gates was "to record the grateful thanks of the people of New Zealand to the United States Marines. They camped at this spot from June 1942 to November 1943, while helping to defend this country. Later they fought in the Pacific Islands, where many of them made the supreme sacrifice, and cemented an everlasting friendship."<sup>48</sup> The fact that Marines were not actually called up to *defend* New Zealand in 1942 perhaps was deemed irrelevant at the time the memorial was erected, with the

more important point to indicate (as encapsulated in the ANZUS Treaty) that the United States was prepared to defend the country from the perceived Communist threat during the Cold War. To those New Zealanders who had known U.S. Marines, it also was important to show that they never forgot the cost of the Americans' war. With the restoration of American-New Zealand defense relations—following a two-decade freeze in response to New Zealand's antinuclear stance of the late 1980s—the site of memory near Paekākāriki has been further developed (figure 7.7). Along with St. Paul's Cathedral in Wellington, it is the main site for American-New Zealand commemorations. Responding to contemporary visitors' expectations that there be not just bronze plaques to look at, there is now a stylized memorial that evokes memory of the Marine barracks that stood on the site, along with information panels to educate the visiting public and the flags of both countries. The memorial and its panels reinforce the localized nature of remembrance of the U.S. Marine Corps. Panel texts and photographs focus attention on the wartime presence of Marines and social interactions between Marines and New Zealanders. There is less emphasis on tensions, including outbreaks of fighting, the most notorious being the racially charged Battle of Manners Street, Wellington, in April 1943. While Marines were almost certainly involved, clashes tend to be portrayed as between New Zealanders and (generic) "American servicemen."<sup>49</sup> There is also little direct reference to the Marines' battles.

A marked preference for local memorials is evident in Australia as well. In 1954, newspapers reported that a delegation of U.S. Marines, including several veterans of Guadalcanal, had arrived in the country to dedicate memorial gates at the Australian Army's Bal-



FIGURE 7.7

*More than 15,000 U.S. Marines were stationed at Camp Russell, Camp Mackay, and Camp Paekākāriki between 1942 and 1944. Here, a service is held at the former site of Camps Russell and Mackay in Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekākāriki, to commemorate the U.S. armed forces in New Zealand on Memorial Day each year.*

Official U.S. State Department photo, courtesy U.S. Embassy Wellington, New Zealand

combe Barracks on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria.<sup>50</sup> The Australian plaque on one side of the gateway states that the gates were erected "as a mark of appreciation of the fighting qualities of the United States Marine Corps," while a U.S. Marine Corps plaque (likely drafted by the Australians) on the other side is an expression of "appreciation of the friendship and cordial hospitality which were extended to the officers and men of the 1st Marine Division by the people of this district in the critical year 1942." The fact the memorial points to a presence by U.S. Marines in 1942, which was the year that many Australians believed their country had been threatened with invasion, rather than 1943, when the Marines were actually in the area, indicates that the timeline had already become hazy within a decade of the war's end.

By the 1960s, public memory and commemoration of the Pacific War had faded in

both Australia and New Zealand.<sup>51</sup> By the end of that decade, young Australians and New Zealanders exposed to the Hollywood and British film industries knew more about far-off battles in the Northern Hemisphere, such as the Battle of Britain and the Battle of the Bulge, than their own countries' battles. Australians rediscovered the Pacific War in the 1990s when then-Prime Minister Paul Keating started the process of shifting the focus of Australian remembrance of World War II toward the Asia-Pacific. He particularly promoted the 1942 Kokoda Trail battle in Papua New Guinea, which, as Beaumont has noted, fit with his nationalist agenda. While most of the 1942 "turning points" in the Pacific were American battles—particularly Coral Sea (albeit with modest Australian contribution), Midway, and Guadalcanal—Kokoda was fought almost exclusively by Australians, with logistics support from Papuan laborers and American aircrews; therefore, this battle could be heralded as an Australian contribution to the "turning back" of the Japanese.<sup>52</sup> The Kokoda battle was so heavily promoted by the mid-2000s that many Australians were willing to embrace the "attractive and superficially plausible" notion that it contributed to a so-called "Battle for Australia," in which the country is supposed to have narrowly averted an invasion. This belief that the country was "saved" in 1942 culminated in a Battle for Australia Day eventually being proclaimed in 2008.<sup>53</sup> The problem with respect to the U.S. Marine Corps is that the parochialism of Australia's remembrance of the Pacific War has resulted in declining acknowledgment of any battle in which Australian forces played a more limited role.<sup>54</sup> There is therefore little public acknowledgment of the American island-hopping campaign and its significance to Australia during World War II.

While the Iwo Jima flag raising has never featured prominently in Australian or New Zealand remembrances of the Pacific War, there is an awareness of Rosenthal's photograph as part of American culture. The Americanization (or at least American influence) of Australian and New Zealand popular culture started in the 1930s, if not earlier, and was propelled forward during and after the Second World War. Rosenthal's acclaimed image was reproduced in American books and magazines sold in the two countries. It also was one of the images to be included in the *Time/Life* illustrated histories of the war purchased by families and held in many public libraries—indeed, the author poured over such books in the 1970s when he was an Australian schoolchild. Meanwhile, American novelist Leon Uris's *Battle Cry* (1953) found a readership in New Zealand, in part, because the country featured prominently in the storyline.<sup>55</sup> At different times, Hollywood also has promoted South Pacific remembrance of the U.S. Marine Corps, with trans-Pacific marketing ensuring that audiences in both countries gained exposure to film portrayals of Marines in their countries. In 1950, *Sands of Iwo Jima* opened to mixed reviews across both Australia and New Zealand. Audiences watched Sergeant John M. Stryker (played by John Wayne) dying, as one reviewer explained, on "the slopes of Mt Suribachi, as the Marines re-enact that famous wartime scene of the raising of the flag."<sup>56</sup> The fact that it was unlikely Sergeant Stryker could start his war in New Zealand and end it on the slopes of Mount Suribachi, as neither the 1st nor 2d Marine Divisions fought there, was no doubt lost on most audience members. Nevertheless, the film reviewer's comment suggests the scene of the flag raising needed no particular introduction. The familiarity with the photograph

was also evident in the 1953–54 reporting of the construction and dedication of the Marine Corps War Memorial at Arlington Ridge, Virginia. In Tasmania, Launceston’s *The Examiner* did not even attempt to explain the battle or the photograph when it described the memorial as “a 75-foot reproduction of the historic raising of the US flag on Mount Suribachi.”<sup>57</sup>

As in the United States, Rosenthal’s image more recently has been an inspiration for artists and activists. Art historians and critics have not explored the extent to which the photograph inspired artists in New Zealand and Australia; however, extant examples allow for some cursory examination. One of the better-known examples of commandeering the image dates to 1977. At this time, activists for indigenous rights in Australia saw the need for an Aboriginal flag as a symbol of their identity. At least one poster, advertising a “land rights dance,” paid homage to Rosenthal’s famous image by portraying Aboriginal men raising the new Aboriginal flag over their traditional lands (figure 7.8).<sup>58</sup> The poster was a nod to the artistic merit of Rosenthal’s photograph and evidence that transnational cultural appropriation of the image was possible.

Six decades after the war, when director Clint Eastwood’s *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006) played in Australian and New Zealand cinemas, the Iwo Jima flag raising appeared not to require much explanation to audiences, despite the war itself being not particularly well remembered by the younger generation.<sup>59</sup> Australians and New Zealanders have long been exposed to Rosenthal’s photograph of the event, either from seeing it reproduced or from cultural references in diverse places ranging from Lego sculptures to the cover of the book and film poster for *Flags of Our Fathers* to cartoon parodies (including *The Simpsons*).<sup>60</sup> A Rosen-

thal-inspired mural by Australian street artist Fukt that shows Marines raising a McDonald’s Drive-Thru sign—a commentary on American capitalism and the perceived threat of globalization—therefore works for his intended local audience. Conversely, Australians and New Zealanders are not always comfortable with its popular usage. When a Tourism Australia advertisement portrayed a family struggling with a beach umbrella in a pose clearly inspired by the Rosenthal photograph, it was criticized by some Australian veterans as “ill-conceived” and insulting to the memory of U.S. veterans (figure 7.9).<sup>61</sup> Notably, similar criticism occurred in 2001 when the Australian cricket team visiting Gallipoli attempted to pay homage to the “Anzacs” of 1915 by imitating a famous photograph of soldiers playing cricket at Gallipoli—a “clumsy public relations stunt” that fell flat with the Australian public.<sup>62</sup>

As the controversy over the Tourism Australia advertisement demonstrates, Rosenthal’s photograph is recognizable to Australians and New Zealanders, even if it occupies a marginal place in their collective memories of World War II. Both countries have their own interpretations of the war, emphasizing the contributions of their national forces. New Zealand and Australia’s geographical locations, hosting of American forces, and participation in their own island campaigns have ensured that the Pacific theater occupies a place in their narratives of the war. This is particularly the case for Australians, for whom the Pacific War is

FIGURE 7.8 (opposite)  
 Land Rights Dance, a poster designed by Chips Mackinolty and printed by Earthworks Poster Collective in 1977, features an image of indigenous people raising the indigenous flag to advocate for Aboriginal land rights in Australia.  
 Chips Mackinolty, *Land Rights Dance* (1977), color photostencil screenprint, 74.8 x 49.6 cm (image) 76.0 x 51.0 cm (sheet), ed. 520, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Mitchell Endowment, 1980 (DC22-1980)



**LAND RIGHTS  
DANCE  
BALMAIN  
TOWN HALL  
FRIDAY JUNE 17TH  
8 P.M.**

**\$2,50**

**JUNIOR & THE GOLDTOPS — WASTED DAZE  
Proceeds to N.S.W. Land Rights Conference**

central to the notion of a “Battle for Australia” and hence, remains more important to their cultural understanding of World War II.<sup>63</sup> New Zealanders, however, continue to favor memory of the European theater, particularly the campaigns in Greece, North Africa, and Italy, where the 2d New Zealand Division—the main combat division raised during the war—incurred most of the country’s casualties.<sup>64</sup> For Māori, the European theater holds even deeper meaning because the 28th (Māori) Battalion—the only indigenous infantry battalion—fought there. The battalion’s *mana* (a concept that ties in prestige, authority, and a spiritual power) and *tapu* (sacredness, forming part of the Māori spiritual and social code) mean the European theater will always be prominent in memory of the war, most especially for those *iwi* (tribes) that supplied men to the battalion.

Rosenthal’s image of the American flag over Mount Suribachi does not resonate down under because it does not slot into the accepted narratives of World War II experience in either Australia or New Zealand. The Stars and Stripes are instantly recognizable, and this prominent symbol of U.S. patriotism only reinforces the fact that Rosenthal captured the actions of another country’s servicemen. Consequently, the Iwo Jima flag raising is of interest to New Zealanders and Australians primarily as an American cultural icon. Memorials, by contrast, generally carry greater meaning for Australians and New Zealanders, particularly when they are erected on localized sites of memory. This is due in large part to the personalized nature of U.S. Marine Corps relationships in these South Pacific nations. One final example underscores this point: in Ballarat, Victoria, a tree planted to mark the wartime presence of units of the 1st Marine Division commemo-

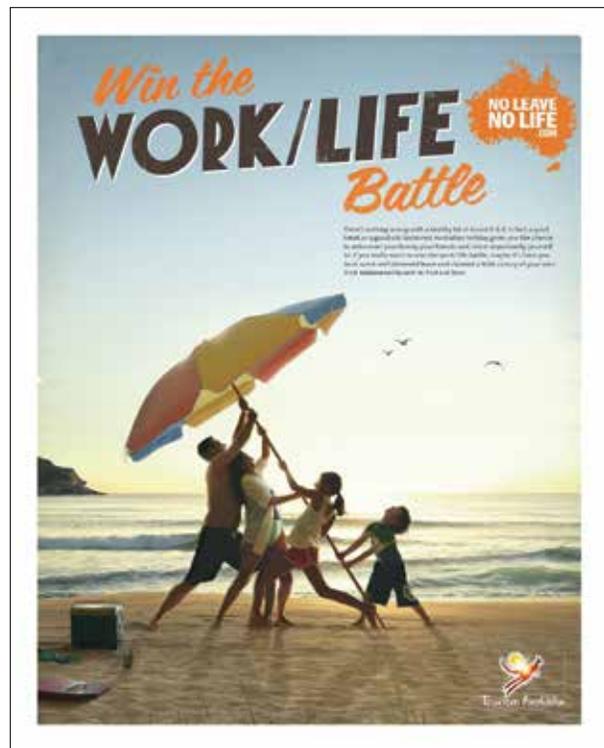


FIGURE 7.9  
*Tourism Australia encouraged domestic travel with “No Leave, No Life,” a campaign designed to address the nation’s unused annual leave. The agency’s lighthearted appropriation of battle imagery in 2009 attracted criticism from Australian war veterans.*  
 Tourism Australia

rates, according to the plaque positioned next to it, “the friendship established between the United States Marines and the citizens of Ballarat [*sic*] during their sojourn here in early 1943” (figure 7.10).<sup>65</sup> Dotting the landscape of Australia and New Zealand, such plaques denote the Marines’ actions on these home fronts in a fashion that can be woven seamlessly and harmoniously into national narratives honoring New Zealand and Australia’s contributions to, and sacrifices in, World War II.

## ENDNOTES

1. The plaques erected by the 2d Marine Division Association in 1951 were originally a mile away on Aotea Quay, until repositioned when that area was redeveloped.
2. As a correspondent for the Associated Press, Rosenthal distinguished himself as a battlefield photographer in

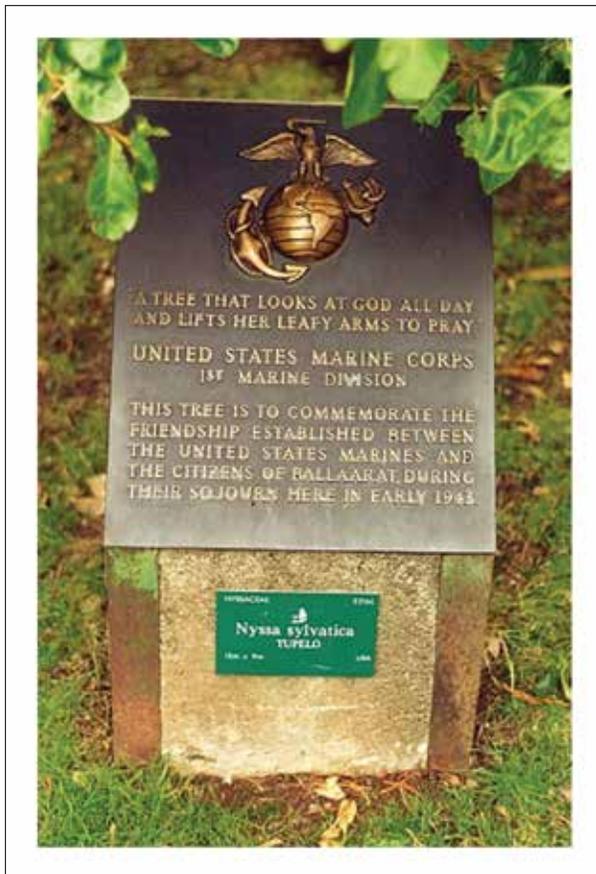


FIGURE 7.10

This plaque appears at the base of a tree planted in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens around Lake Wendouree to commemorate the U.S. Marine Corps' wartime presence in Ballarat, Australia.

Courtesy of Viv Martin

the Pacific theater of operations at Hollandia (now Jayapura), New Guinea; Guam, Mariana Islands; Peleliu and Angaur, islands of Palau; and Iwo Jima, Japan.

3. Delegates from Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, France, China, Canada, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, and the United States witnessed the formal ceremony of Japanese surrender that brought an end to World War II.
4. Richard W. Johnston, *Follow Me!: The Story of the Second Marine Division in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1948), 83. Johnston was a war correspondent for United Press International during World War II.
5. Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 463–64. While the prevalence of U.S.-Japanese conflict in visual media has no doubt shaped global perceptions of the Pacific War, Jackson's perspective also is shaped by his own country's collective memory of World War II, which is Eurocentric and in fact Anglocentric. British focus on the war against Nazi Germany has resulted in an "amnesia" in popular memory about the Asia-Pacific War. For more on this topic, see Lucy Noakes

and Juliette Pattinson, ed., *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

6. The Second Sino-Japanese War began with the Japanese launched major attacks on Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanking in 1937. The Allied nations' defeat of Japan in 1945 ended its occupation of China.
7. Also known as the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, the Empire Air Training Scheme was designed to train British Empire aircrews for service primarily in the British Royal Air Force. See Andrew Stewart, "The 1939 British and Canadian 'Empire Air Training Scheme' Negotiations," *The Round Table: Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 93, no. 377 (2004): 739–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0035853042000300214>.
8. As part of this effort, the Australian government participated in defense discussions between the British Empire, Netherlands East Indies, and the United States.
9. Due to the time difference, this declaration of war occurred on 7 December in the United States.
10. John Curtin, "The Task Ahead," *Herald* (Melbourne, AU), 27 December 1941.
11. Joan Beaumont, ed., *Australia's War, 1939–45* (Sydney, AU: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 31.
12. Edward J. Drea, "'Great Patience is Needed': America Encounters Australia, 1942," *War & Society* 11, no. 1 (May 1993): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1179/0729247937911988877>.
13. Nancy M. Taylor, *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939–1945: The Home Front*, vol. I (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1986), 621.
14. Deborah Montgomerie, *The Women's War: New Zealand Women, 1939–45* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001), 168.
15. Thayer Soule, *Shooting the Pacific War: Marine Corps Combat Photography in WWII* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 41.
16. Denys Bevan, *United States Forces in New Zealand, 1942–1945* (Alexandra, NZ: MacPherson Publishing, 1992), 91–116.
17. This phrase was commonly used in Australia as well. From 17 February to 30 April 2010, the City Gallery in Melbourne hosted the exhibition *Over-Paid, Over-Sexed and Over Here?: U.S. Marines in Wartime Melbourne 1943* in tribute to the "friendly invasion" of American servicemen during World War II.
18. "Roll of Honour," *Evening Post* (Wellington, AU), 20 November 1945, 1.
19. "NZ War Effort—Tribute to Mr Nash—Mr Roosevelt's Letter," *Auckland Star* (NZ), 6 April 1943, 4.
20. "Anzac Day Commemoration," *Rodney and Otamatea Times, Waitemata and Kaipara Gazette* (NZ), 28 April 1943, 3. By 1943, Anzac Day, which was observed in both Australia and New Zealand, commemorated those who served and the fallen from all wars, particularly World War I and World War II.
21. "Thanks to Marines: Reserve and Beaches Saved," *Evening Post* (Wellington, AU), 12 January 1943, 4.
22. "Saipan Won after Grim Fight," *Auckland Star* (NZ), 11 July 1944, 4.

23. Frank Dexter, "C Gloucester Marines Were Here—Tough Fighters Enjoyed Holiday," *Argus* (Melbourne, AU), 29 December 1943, 2.
24. P. G. A. Orders, *Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the Challenge of the United States, 1939–45: A Study in International History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 129–30.
25. William M. Leary, ed., *We Shall Return!: MacArthur's Commanders and the Defeat of Japan* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 51–52.
26. Joan Beaumont, "Remembering the Heroes of Australia's Wars: From Heroic to Post-Heroic Memory," in *Heroism and the Changing Character of War: Toward Post-Heroic Warfare?*, ed. Sibylle Scheipers (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 337.
27. Paul Hasluck, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945*, Series Four-Civil, vol. II, *The Government and the People, 1942–1945* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1970), 570.
28. "Battle Rages on Iwo Jima. 'Doorstep of Tokyo,'" *Auckland Star* (NZ), 20 February 1945.
29. "Iwo Jima Success," *News* (Adelaide, AU), 23 February 1945, 1.
30. "Iwo Jima Peak Stormed," *Argus* (Melbourne, AU), 24 February 1945, 1.
31. "Iwo Jima, Scene of the Latest Pacific Landing by United States Marines," *New Zealand Herald* (Auckland), 22 February 1945, 7.
32. "Big Fight on Iwo Jima," *Daily News* (Perth), 20 February 1945, 1; and "Country Like Gallipoli. American Casualties Fairly High," *New Zealand Herald* (Auckland), 21 February 1945, 7.
33. "Gallipoli of the Pacific Seas," *Daily Examiner* (Grafton, AU), 24 February 1945, 2.
34. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy asked the four major picture-gathering agencies (Associated Press, International News Service, Acme Newspictures, and *Life* magazine) to pool their resources to supply all daily and weekly newspapers with images from the front lines. Wartime censorship guidelines required that all photographs be cleared officially in Washington, DC, before being released to the press. For an expanded discussion of photographic censorship in Australia, see Prue Torney-Parlicki, "'Grave Security Obligations': The Australian Government's Refusal to Accredited Newspaper Photographers to Combat Areas during the Second World War," *War & Society* 16, no. 1 (2013): 113, <https://doi.org/10.1179/war.1998.16.1.105>.
35. For New Zealand's wartime censorship provisions and propaganda machinery, see Taylor, *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939–1945*, 886–89. For Australia's, see Kay Saunders, "'An Instrument of Strategy': Propaganda, Public Policy and the Media in Australia during the Second World War," *War & Society* 15, no. 2 (1997): 75–90, <https://doi.org/10.1179/072924797791201201>.
36. See the photograph in the *Evening Post* (Wellington, NZ), 19 March 1945.
37. "Pulitzer Prizes," *Examiner* (Launceston, TAS), 9 May 1945, 9.
38. "The Flag Goes Up: Most Famous Picture of the War," *Sun* (Sydney, AU), 13 May 1945, 2.
39. "Famous War Photograph," *Advocate* (Melbourne, AU), 30 May 1945, 4.
40. "Famous War Picture Taken by Convert," *Catholic Weekly* (Sydney, AU), 31 May 1945, 6.
41. "After Kokoda Fell," *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, AU), 13 November 1942, 1.
42. Warren Pearson and Grant O'Neill, "Australia Day: A Day for All Australians?," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, eds. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 77–78.
43. "US Generals' Flag Raising Fever," *Newcastle Sun* (New South Wales, AU), 20 June 1945, 2.
44. "Grateful," letter to the editor, "Memorial to USMC," *Evening Post* (Wellington, NZ), 21 November 1945, 6.
45. Norman Harper, *A Great and Powerful Friend: A Study of Australian American Relations between 1900 and 1975* (Brisbane, AU: University of Queensland Press, 1987), ix.
46. For more on the ANZUS Pact, see "The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty), 1951," Milestones: 1945–1952, Office of the Historian, Department of State.
47. Joan Beaumont, "Australian Memory and the US Wartime Alliance: The Australian-American Memorial and the Battle of the Coral Sea," *War & Society* 22, no. 1 (2004): 69–87, <https://doi.org/10.1179/072924704791202121>.
48. "The Message on Memorial Gates," *Evening Post* (Wellington, NZ), 8 February 1963.
49. "Battle of Manners Street, 3 April 1943," New Zealand History, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 9 December 2016.
50. Some units of the 1st Marine Division had been based there after Guadalcanal.
51. Beaumont, "Remembering the Heroes of Australia's Wars," 336–37.
52. Joan Beaumont, "The Diplomacy of Extra-Territorial Heritage: The Kokoda Track, Papua New Guinea," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 22, no. 5 (2016): 357, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2016.1153496>.
53. Peter Stanley, "What Is the Battle for Australia?," *Australian Army Journal* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 18. Stanley is not a supporter of the concept.
54. Elizabeth Rechniewski, "Remembering the Battle for Australia," *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7, no.1 (2010): 6–7.
55. Based largely on Uris's experience with the 6th Marine Regiment during World War II, the book tells the story of how a diverse group came together to form an effective team in battle. Part of the novel takes place in New Zealand, where the Americans trained in preparation for the Battle of Guadalcanal and later returned for rest and recovery before the Tarawa campaign.
56. "George Hart Talks about Films," *Sun* (Sydney, AU), 7 August 1950, 15.
57. "US Marine Corps Monument," *Examiner* (Launceston, TAS), 12 November 1954, 25.

58. Mathieu Gallois, "The Aboriginal Flag as Art," *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 2 (2016): 47.
59. A reviewer from *The New Zealand Herald* notes of *Flags of Our Fathers* that "this multi-layered plot reveals that the photograph of the celebrated six men raising the US flag on Mt Suribachi before the battle for the Japanese garrison of Iwo Jima was not all it seemed." Within this statement seems to be an assumption that the image is sufficiently well recognized that no explanation is necessary—unless, perhaps, there is an assumption that young people who do not know the context can "Google it" if they wish. See "Behind the Lines of *Flags of Our Fathers*," *New Zealand Herald*, 2 November 2006.
60. See, for example, Janis L. Edwards and Carol K. Winkler, "Representational Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (1997), 289–310, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639709384187>.
61. Conrad Walters, "So Why the Bloody Hell Did They Flag that Idea?," *Sydney (AU) Morning Herald*, 10 May 2009, 14.
62. Joyce Morgan, "Battlefield the Wrong Pitch for the Baggy Greens," *Sydney (AU) Morning Herald*, 30 May 2001, 16.
63. Australian historians Christina Twomey and Ernest Koh note that the Pacific War "dominates the national historical consciousness about the Second World War, despite large numbers of Australian service personnel serving in the European, Mediterranean and African theatres." See Christina Twomey and Ernest Koh, ed., *The Pacific War: Aftermaths, Remembrance and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 5.
64. New Zealand's contribution to the Pacific War was, by contrast, very modest, with a half-strength infantry division fighting in three small actions during 1943–44, along with air and naval contributions. Consequently, as military historian Reg Newell notes, New Zealand's participation in the Pacific has been virtually, but not completely, "lost to public memory." See Reg Newell, *Pacific Star: 3NZ Division in the South Pacific in World War II* (Auckland, NZ: Exisle Publishing, 2015), 9.
65. Plaque in Lake Wendouree Gardens, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia.

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# HOW THE IWO JIMA MEMORIAL BECAME A PERSONAL MORTUARY MONUMENT FOR MY JAPANESE MOTHER

*by Yui Suzuki, PhD*

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Based on Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning photo *Old Glory Goes Up on Mount Suribachi*, Iwo Jima, the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial is commonly known as the "Iwo Jima Memorial." To most Japanese civilians, the image of six U.S. soldiers planting an American flag atop Mount Suribachi symbolizes the Battle of Iwo Jima (19 February–26 March 1945) and all the soldiers who fell during the intense combat, which incurred heavy losses on both sides.<sup>1</sup> That this massive, towering public monument was built solely to honor all U.S. Marine Corps personnel who died defending their country is a fact lost on most Japanese tourists who visit the site.<sup>2</sup> For example, the best-selling Japanese travel guidebook series, *Chikyu no arukikata* (Globe-Trotter Travel Guidebook) introduces the Marine Corps War Memorial by explaining that it is a memorial dedicated to the Battle of Iwo Jima. It explains that the monument was modeled after Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph, with a subsection that provides additional information of the battle itself. There is no mention that the memorial is dedicated to all U.S. Marine Corps personnel

who have given up their lives in service. The 2006 film *Letters from Iwo Jima* directed and co-produced by Clint Eastwood also has made the site quite popular among Japanese tourists, especially among the younger generation. On my most recent visit to the memorial, I watched with horror as three Japanese tourists in their 20s snapped smartphone shots in front of the monument while making silly, embarrassing poses. I made sure to keep a good distance from them lest other visitors thought I was part of their frivolous group. As monuments that pay tribute to the dead, memorials are particularly complicated in the ways they may provoke and produce multiple and conflicting voices and meanings, layered with public views and personal interpretations.

The Marine Corps War Memorial was one of the first places my mother wanted to see when she and my father flew out from Japan to Washington, DC, to visit their only daughter. Having lost her own father, Fumio Tenmyo, at Iwo Jima when she was four, my mother had always been interested in the history of the notorious battle. Therefore, she was thrilled that



FIGURE 8.1

*The author and her mother on 20 October 2008 at the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, Arlington, VA.*

Courtesy of the author

she could finally visit the Iwo Jima Memorial and pay her respects more than 60 years after the war. It was a way of commemorating the battle and, more important, of paying tribute to her father who never returned. In this essay, I write about my mother's engagement with the Iwo Jima monument, especially the memorial's role as a site of commemorative ritual and as a material object that connects the living and the dead. According to historian John Bodnar, memorials elicit both official and personal cultural expressions and serve as sites for the exchange between the two.<sup>3</sup> While I certainly agree with this idea, my mother's personal connection with the Marine Corps War Memorial as a kind of mortuary monu-

ment reveals the extremely complex nature of memorials, especially war monuments, in which there are always opposing camps ("us and them," "the victor and the defeated," "the allies and the enemy"). Her experience with the Iwo Jima Memorial is one example in which individual motivations actively appropriate and apply new meanings to a memorial, often contradicting (and at times usurping) its original function. As such, it is important to acknowledge that war monuments will always be subject to continuous reinterpretations by those who engage with them directly.

To understand my mother's treatment of the Marine Corps War Memorial as a kind of mortuary monument for her father, one must

have some knowledge of Japanese beliefs and practices around death and the afterlife. Even today, mortuary practices and the agency of departed and ancestral spirits, known as *hotoke*, remain a vital part of Japanese everyday life. Spirits of the Japanese dead, including ancestors, are entities who act as guardians of the household lineage they belonged to while they were alive. Ian Reader states,

*Traditional Japanese cosmology considered that each person had a soul (tama) which invested the physical body with life: death was a result of the severance of the tama from the physical body. The soul did not, however, cease with death but journeyed to the world of the dead while continuing to maintain an interest in this world, especially in its extant kin, looking over and protecting them as a guardian ancestral spirit.*<sup>4</sup>

Thus, they are propitiated by the living through a variety of daily and seasonal rituals performed at the family altar or at their graves. I have fond childhood memories of my grandmother making daily offerings to the family altar that contained my grandfather's memorial tablet with his posthumous "Buddhist precepts name" and his memorial portraiture, a black and white photo of a man with fleshy cheeks and round glasses. Every morning and evening, she would offer him and our ancestral spirits steamed white rice on a small plate and a glass of water. She would then light two slender sticks of fragrant aloeswood incense and chant a brief Buddhist prayer. Even though I was a young child, I instinctively understood the importance of this daily ritual as a way of maintaining our ties to those who have crossed over. These rites also ask our kindred spirits to protect us from harm as we go about our day. Other memorable moments with my grandmother include



FIGURE 8.2  
The Tenmyo family's main ancestral grave (center)  
at Komyoji Temple, Tokyo, Japan.  
Courtesy of the author

our walks to my grandfather's grave on the grounds of a local Buddhist temple. After offering fresh flowers from her garden and a bundle of incense there, my grandmother would scoop water from a wooden bucket with a ladle and pour it over his grave marker, a beautiful, glossy slab of dark gray slate. I loved helping her pour the water and watch the grayish slate slowly turn dark bluish-black as the water ran down the polished rock surface, making it gleam and sparkle in the sun. As I poured ladle after ladle of water from the bucket, my grandmother would recount the same story she always told me on these visits:

*Your grandfather died in Iwo Jima during World War II and his body was never recovered. He most likely perished in one of the underground tunnels where the temperatures would reach up to 104°F. Food and water supplies were so scarce that the soldiers all suffered from terrible heat, exhaustion and thirst. So let's make sure to give your grandfather a lot of water to quench his thirst.*

Growing up with no father, a protective



FIGURE 8.3

*Fumio Tenmyo's memorial stone, with epitaph bearing his name, age, posthumous precept name, and rank in the Japanese Imperial Army. It also includes his date and place of death—17 March 1945, Iwo Jima.*  
Courtesy of the author

mother, and a much older sister, my mother was always looking for ways to keep the connection to her father alive, whether this was through visiting his grave or making offerings to the family altar (that contained his memorial tablet and photograph) whenever she visited my grandmother. She had only a few memories of her father before he was drafted, such as the times she sat on his lap in the early mornings, watching him eat breakfast and read the newspaper. According to my grandmother, my grandfather was a gentle and serious man who worked as a researcher for the Japanese Imperial Agricultural Association, a central organization for agricultural cooperatives. He also had



FIGURE 8.4

*Fumio Tenmyo's memorial stone (far left), the Tenmyo family ancestral grave (right), and Tenmyo ancestral grave marker (front left) bearing the deceased member names, posthumous precept names, and death dates.*  
Courtesy of the author

an incredible ability to focus. One time, he was completely immersed in his reading and failed to notice that one of his kimono sleeves had caught fire from the embers of the charcoal burning inside the *hibachi* beside him.<sup>5</sup>

Fumio Tenmyo was 43 years old when he was drafted into service for the Japanese Imperial Army and sent to Iwo Jima in February 1945. According to the inscription on his grave-stone, he was a first lieutenant at the time of his death. He was well past the age for being drafted, but the situation in Japan was dire by this time. Within a month after he left for Iwo Jima, he was presumed killed in action, his remains still missing even now. My mother's continuous desire to find meaningful ways to connect with her father remained strong all through her life.

It was a dry, breezy, sunny October day when my parents and I drove out to Arlington, Virginia, to visit the Iwo Jima Memorial. Cast in bronze above a polished granite base, this colossal sculpture stands on a grassy knoll that stretches out for several acres. That day, the Stars and Stripes flapped vigorously in the wind as if to reenact the moment Rosenthal

framed his famous shot of the six men hoisting the flag on Mount Suribachi. Even though we had seen both Rosenthal's iconic photograph and the reproduced images of the memorial countless times in the media, our encounter with a three-dimensional object was unexpectedly refreshing and full of impact as we stood in awe by the impressive 78-foot memorial towering over us. The dense weight of the 100-ton bronze seemed to impart a sense of determinism, valor, and strength on the part of the American soldiers as they struggled to secure the flagpole into the ground.

Just a year before her U.S. visit, my mother had seen a documentary about Iwo Jima and about continued efforts by individuals and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to recover the war dead and bring them back home. She began to harbor the far-fetched notion that perhaps my grandfather's bones had somehow ended up in a U.S. military cemetery, maybe even at Arlington. For this reason, when my mother visited the Marine Corps War Memorial, it was as if she were visiting his grave. She brought a bouquet of flowers for him, but had a hard time trying to figure out where to leave it. I did not think it was appropriate for my mother to treat the memorial as a personal grave marker, especially after reading one of the inscriptions on the base: "In honor and memory of the men of the United States Marine Corps who have given their lives to their country since 10 November 1775."

There were quite a few visitors congregating around the monument and I feared that it might offend some of them if they were veterans or had friends and family who served in the U.S. Marine Corps. I was already self-conscious of the fact that we were the only group of Japanese at the site. My father and I also noticed the burnished gold names and dates of the

major Marine Corps engagements encircling the base. I said to my mother, "I don't think you should leave those flowers here for grandfather. It's not a memorial honoring all those who died at Iwo Jima. It's specifically dedicated to *all U.S. Marines* who died fighting for their country." My mother ignored my pleas saying, "Does it matter whether you are American or Japanese if you want to honor the dead? This isn't just for grandfather. It's also for all those who died and never made it back to their country. Why would anybody be offended by such a gesture?" I stopped arguing because I knew that my mother would have a retort for anything I could say. But to meet me halfway, she placed her bouquet in an inconspicuous area, rather than at the official side of the memorial where public ceremonies and parades are held. I sighed and conceded, thinking that at least she did not insist on burning incense or dowsing the monument with water.

Today, I look back at our family visit to the Marine Corps War Memorial with feelings of happy nostalgia mixed with a tinge of sadness and regret. My mother passed away a few years later from cancer, and we never made it back to the monument together. My second trip back to the site came years later, when I was invited by a colleague to write a personal reflection for this collaborative publication on the Iwo Jima flag raising. As I stood in quiet contemplation gazing at the monument, a myriad of thoughts and emotions went through my mind. Despite my mother's insistence on visiting the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, she had never once set foot in Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine, the monument that commemorates Japan's war dead—including my grandfather—as deified spirits.<sup>6</sup> Yasukuni is well known internationally, for the monument also enshrines war criminals, and is regarded by many countries, particularly



FIGURE 8.5

*Tenmyo family photograph taken ca. 1944 or 1945. From left to right: the author's great grandmother, aunt (in front), great grandfather, grandmother, mother (in front), and grandfather (Fumio Tenmyo).*

Courtesy of the author

South Korea and China, as glorifying Japan's forcible colonization program and aggressive militarist past. I wondered why my mother was so insistent on visiting the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial when she had never once bothered to visit Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, Japan, where she resided.

I believe my mother avoided Yasukuni Shrine because it was a place that was too engrossed in contemporary politics and tinged with an attitude of victimization. The shrine is also complicated by the fact that many of the religious rites performed there for the war dead belong to a category known as "spirit pacification rituals" (*chinkonsai*).<sup>7</sup> Japan has a long his-

tory of venerating the dead, and an equally powerful notion and belief that those who died a wrongful death were particularly inclined toward negatively impacting the living through curses. Perhaps my mother did not want to connect to her father that way, to regard him as an angry ghost who would cause harm to his living kin. She would often tell me that her father was always protecting us. When I was offered my first tenure-track job as assistant professor and thinking about whether or not to take it, my mother insisted that everything was going to be okay and I should take the job because my grandfather was protecting me. She was convinced that he was sending some sort of sign

from the other world because the day I received the offer coincided with the death anniversary of my grandfather (17 March).

Joshua A. Irizarry's ethnographic research on Japanese mortuary objects and mortuary observances well articulates my mother's (and my own) reactions regarding her deceased father as a typical and important part of Japanese everyday life and ritual practice.<sup>8</sup> Particularly insightful is his view that spirits of the Japanese dead belong simultaneously of this world and the other. Material things, particularly memorial objects, "mediated how the Japanese represent and experience the transcendent in both memorial ritual and in their daily interactions."<sup>9</sup> Irizarry states that these interactions with the dead are part of a decades-long process that begins at the wake and funeral and continues with the living through daily offerings and regular interactions, such as visits to family graves. Being a lifelong process for the living, Irizarry further notes that the person is likely to have multiple, shifting relationships with memorial objects at different stages of remembering and "different understandings of the semiotic processes in which they have been engaged."<sup>10</sup>

This idea of memorial objects mediating and representing daily interactions between the living and the dead was certainly true for my mother and myself. For us, the Iwo Jima Memorial became both a sacred site and a material object that mediated our personal relationships with Fumio Tenmyo. More than half a century after the loss of her father and the war, the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial was not about "the defeated us" and "victorious them." For her, it was just another opportunity to have a private moment with her father in front of an iconic monument that by this time came to represent the Battle of Iwo Jima itself, thanks to Joe Rosenthal's seminal photograph.

As I stood gazing at the war memorial this second time around, I reflected on how material objects, whether a colossal sculpture, a simple grave marker, or a framed photograph of a loved one, allow us to deal with the imminent fact of death. I had been thinking a lot about one's mortality lately, more so than usual because it was one of those summers where I received an unusually high number of death announcements. I do not recall having to write so many condolence cards at once, so much so that it made me think about my own inevitable demise.

I hired an estate lawyer and drew up my will, so that I could at least be prepared. In doing so, it drew out many internal conversations as well as discussions with friends about our own mortality and the aftermath, including whether to cremate or bury, the high costs of funeral services and cemetery plots, ideal places to scatter one's ashes, and so forth. Cicero once stated, "The life of the dead is placed on the memories of the living." My grandfather and my mother continue to live through my thoughts, actions, and words. But those are not enough. As sensing, feeling, embodied creatures, we have a perpetual yearning to stay firmly connected to our deceased loved ones. Tangible, material objects allow us to satiate those longings, helping us to reanimate and rekindle our memories of the deceased and to immortalize them. We kiss their photographs, collect their bones, scatter their ashes, chase their scents embedded in their clothes, visit their graves, and leave offerings and gifts for them. And memorials, as both a sacred place and physical presence, allow this magic to happen.

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## ENDNOTES

1. The United States suffered 6,800 fatalities and close to

- 20,000 injured. Japan suffered 20,700 deaths. John W. Dower, "Lessons from Iwo Jima," *Perspectives on History*, September 2007, 54.
2. Reiko Yamamoto, ed., *Chikyu no Arukikata: Washington DC, Baltimore, Annapolis, Philadelphia* (Tokyo: Diamond Big Company), 122–23.
  3. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13–14.
  4. Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991), 40.
  5. *Hibachi* is a traditional Japanese heating device designed to hold burning charcoal.
  6. Yasukuni Shrine enshrined 14 executed World War II Class-A Japanese war criminals in 1978.
  7. On Yasukuni and spirit pacification rites, see Kuroda Toshio, "The World of Spirit Pacification: Issues of State and Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3/4 (Fall 1996): 321–51.
  8. Joshua A. Irizarry, "Signs of Life: Grounding the Transcendent in Japanese Memorial Objects," *Signs and Society* 2, no. S1 (Supplement 2014): 160–87.
  9. Irizarry, "Signs of Life," 160–61.
  10. Irizarry, "Signs of Life," 182.

# PART THREE

## Recovering the Past

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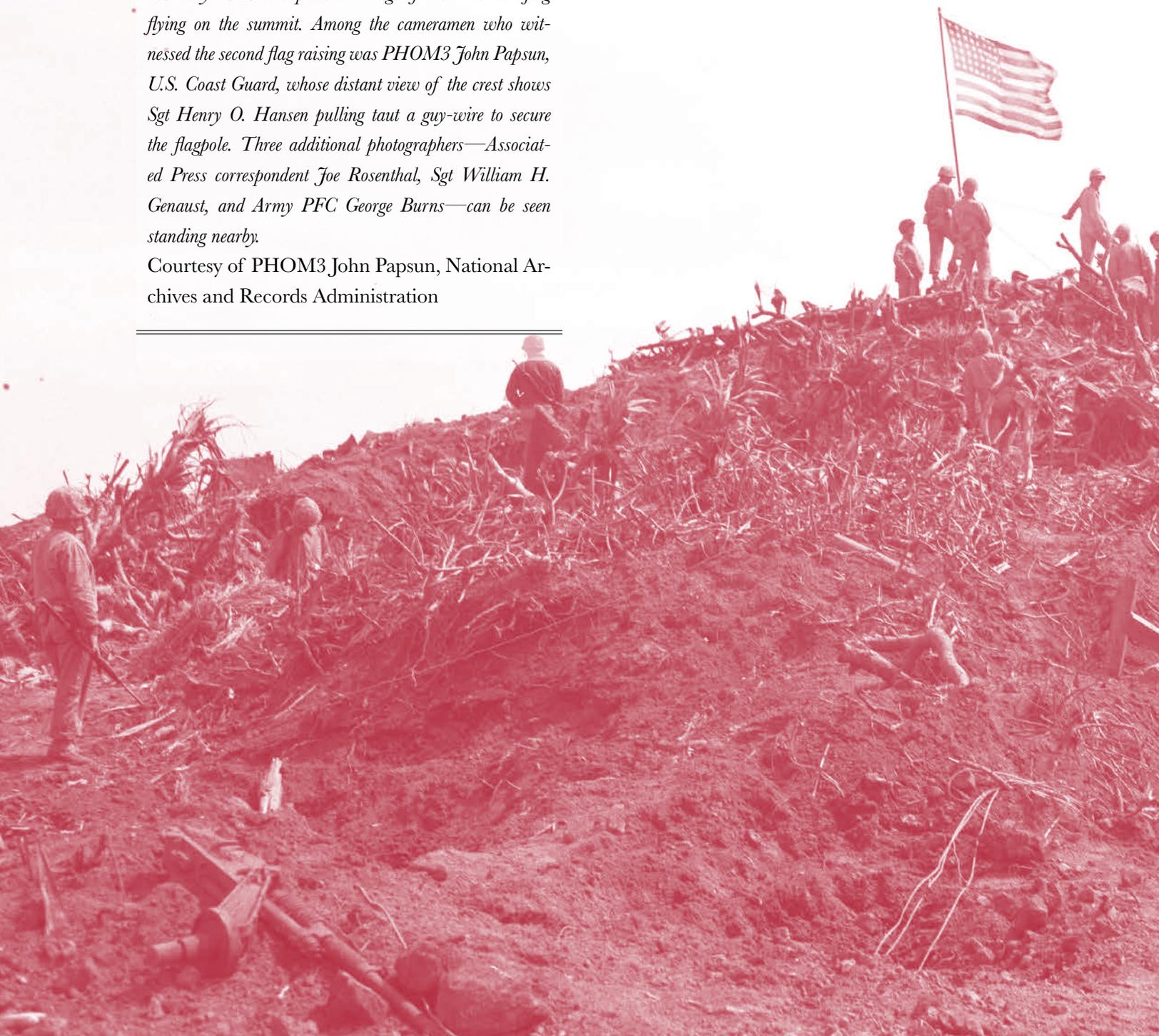
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*Numerous photographers climbed Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945 to capture an image of the American flag flying on the summit. Among the cameramen who witnessed the second flag raising was PHOM3 John Papsun, U.S. Coast Guard, whose distant view of the crest shows Sgt Henry O. Hansen pulling taut a guy-wire to secure the flagpole. Three additional photographers—Associated Press correspondent Joe Rosenthal, Sgt William H. Genaust, and Army PFC George Burns—can be seen standing nearby.*

Courtesy of PHOM3 John Papsun, National Archives and Records Administration

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## A FLAG FOR SURIBACHI

### *The First and Forgotten Flag Raising on Iwo Jima*

*by Stephen Foley and Dustin Spence*

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For more than 70 years, the enduring image to emerge from the Battle of Iwo Jima has been that of six men struggling to raise the American flag atop a windswept mountain on this small Pacific island 650 nautical miles south, southeast of the Japanese capital, Tokyo. This photograph, taken by Associated Press photographer Joseph Rosenthal on Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945, continues to be one of the most recognizable war photographs ever taken and is to this day one of the most reproduced images in the world (see figure 0.2).<sup>1</sup> But before Rosenthal had the opportunity to take his iconic photograph, another American flag was raised on the summit that day, an event that has been less celebrated over time (figure 9.1). Through confusion, ambiguity, and simple bad luck, this flag and the servicemen who raised it have long been overshadowed by Rosenthal's famous image of a replacement flag being hoisted on the same spot some hours later. Those who photographed the original flag raising likewise have been obscured by the visual allure that has ensured Rosenthal's image remains recognizable

to the American public even to this day. This chapter highlights the actions of these men in an attempt to redress the balance of an event that is central to the history of the U.S. Marine Corps, specifically, and American military history, in general. Revisiting this topic—taking a closer look at the first flag raising and how it has been forgotten—permits a more complete understanding of its meaning to the Marines who fought on Iwo Jima as well as the ways in which historical memory can both obscure and inform later generations.

### THE MENACE OF SURIBACHI

The southern tip of Iwo Jima is dominated by Mount Suribachi, an extinct volcano that rises more than 500 feet in height. The Japanese had fortified the mountain with weapons ranging from large caliber coastal guns and cleverly concealed artillery pieces to a myriad of concrete pillboxes and bunkers housing machine guns, riflemen, and mortars. These defensive positions were often linked by an extensive sys-

tem of caves, man-made tunnels, and trenches. From the lofty heights of the volcano, the Japanese could observe the movements of any attacking force and direct fire on them while also controlling the fire of batteries farther to the north. It was imperative to the success of the U.S. assault that Mount Suribachi be neutralized as soon as possible and its heights be used to American advantage. During the Battle of Iwo Jima, the primary objective of the 5th Marine Division's 28th Marines was to secure the narrow southern portion of the island, while other division elements, along with the 4th Marine Division, would shift right to secure the first airfield and to begin the drive up the main body of the island.<sup>2</sup>

Detailed preinvasion planning ensured that the 28th Marines' regimental combat team would ultimately secure the enemy bastion that Mount Suribachi had become; however, the events following the initial landing would determine which units would secure its summit.<sup>3</sup> Landing at 0900 hours on 19 February, the initial assault waves of U.S. forces encountered light to moderate enemy fire until the beaches became congested with Marines of the following waves, some of whom were support troops. Struggling to negotiate the soft volcanic ash and series of steep terraces just inland from the invasion beaches, the Marines and corpsmen became targets for the Japanese defenders, who unleashed a furious hail of fire on them, particularly from artillery and mortars emplaced on the slopes of Mount Suribachi. Nevertheless, by 1035, lead elements of the 1st Battalion had advanced across the narrow neck of the island, effectively cutting it in two. With a tenuous presence on the western shore, the regiment turned south to face the mountain head on.<sup>4</sup>

Under almost continuous fire, the 28th

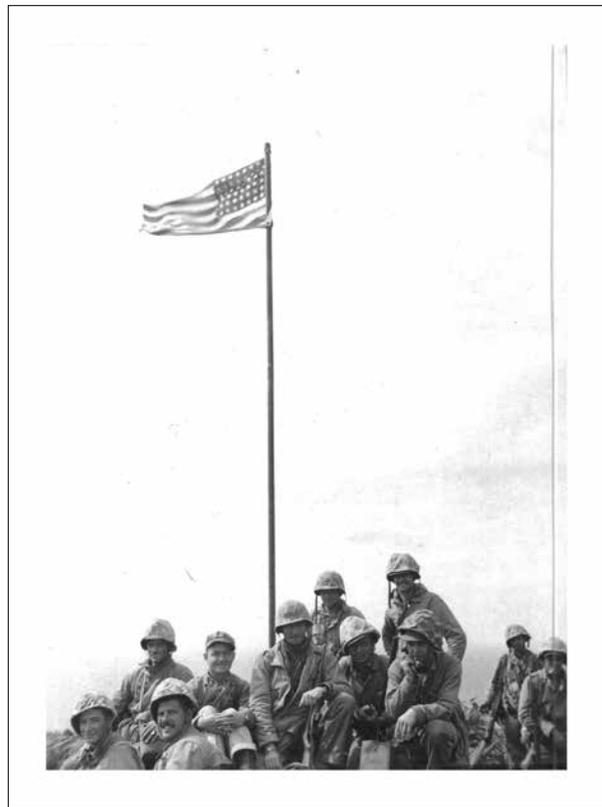


FIGURE 9.1

*Photograph taken by SSgt Meyers A. Cornelius of Marines posed beneath the first flag after they helped secure the summit of Mount Suribachi.* Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of SSgt Meyers A. Cornelius, National Archives and Records Administration

Marines overcame determined enemy opposition to encircle the mountain. In many areas, the rough terrain prevented tanks from providing support, and it was up to fire squads, well-rehearsed in small unit tactics and aided by demolition and flamethrower teams, to neutralize these formidable enemy positions. The regiment suffered tremendous casualties, particularly on 21 and 22 February, when it moved against the main body of Japanese defenders at the base of Mount Suribachi; however, by the afternoon of 22 February, the 28th Marines had the remaining opposition forces nearly surrounded.<sup>5</sup> The next phase in securing the volcano would be to seize and occupy the crest itself, even though mopping-up operations continued

in search of well-concealed enemy positions at its base.

On 21 February, the operations officer for 28th Marines, Major Oscar F. Peatross, had to consider what might bring about the final capture of the mountain. On this day, the regiment received a message stressing the importance of seizing Suribachi as soon as was practicable. "At that time," Peatross later recalled, "we had our arms practically wrapped around Suribachi. Complete seizure meant to us sending a patrol to the top of the mountain and cleaning out the caves at the base of the volcano."<sup>6</sup>

The following day, 22 February, a patrol from Company G, 3d Battalion, moved down the western face of the mountain toward the southern tip of the island. On the opposite shore, a patrol from Company E, 2d Battalion, moved around the eastern base of the mountain to link up with the 3d Battalion unit. Both sought suitable routes up the slopes of the volcano, but preinvasion naval bombardment had destroyed existing trails such that there were none to be found in the patrol areas. The only passable route up the volcano lay in 2d Battalion's zone facing the northern and northeastern slopes.<sup>7</sup>

While the Marines had confidence in their plan to take the objective, the commanding officers understood that victory over such a clearly visual symbol would strengthen U.S. resolve across the entire island. For days now, the mountain stood menacingly over the Americans, its Japanese defenders raining death and destruction on those fighting below. Colonel Harry B. Liversedge, commanding officer of the 28th Marines, met with the 2d Battalion's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson, to discuss what to do when a force successfully reached the summit. Liversedge felt it was important to let the troops fighting

elsewhere on the island know that the mountain had been secured. After much discussion, including the possibility of lighting smoke pots, the colonels adopted Johnson's idea of raising the American flag. Liversedge had only one stipulation: the patrol to the summit should be led by an officer capable of directing all types of supporting fire should it be required. To that end, he recommended First Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier, the executive officer of Company E, to lead the patrol.<sup>8</sup>

Liversedge was familiar with Lieutenant Schrier, as the two men had previously served together in the Marine Raiders. They also shared parallel service records in that they could both be termed *mustangs*, or officers who had been promoted from the ranks. Liversedge had enlisted as a private in the Marine Corps in 1917 before receiving a commission in 1918. He commanded the 3d Marine Raider Battalion from September 1942 to March 1943, whereupon he took command of the 1st Marine Raider Regiment.<sup>9</sup> Schrier had enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1936. Six years later, while serving as a platoon sergeant with the 2d Marine Raider Battalion, Schrier participated in the famed "Long Patrol" on Guadalcanal and led part of his company to safety following a Japanese ambush during U.S. operations behind enemy lines during this patrol.<sup>10</sup> His decisiveness may have impressed Marine Corps leadership to the point that he was offered a commission early in 1943.<sup>11</sup> Soon thereafter, as the regimental reconnaissance and observation officer for the 1st Marine Raider Regiment, Schrier led small parties behind enemy lines to gather information on Japanese troop movements and suitable landing sites for upcoming operations in the New Georgia area of the Solomon Islands—actions that would have been known to Liversedge, his commanding officer. Although

the Raider units disbanded in early 1944, it was not long before Liversedge and Schrier found themselves working together again in the 5th Marine Division. The division had many former Raiders in its ranks, along with personnel drawn from the similarly disbanded Marine parachute units.<sup>12</sup> On Iwo Jima, Schrier was the only 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, executive officer with prior combat experience, a fact that was not lost on Liversedge when he selected Schrier to lead the combat patrol up Mount Suribachi.<sup>13</sup>

To accomplish the flag-raising mission, Johnson directed Company E, commanded by former Marine parachutist Captain Dave E. Severance, to provide the patrol. Severance in turn chose his 3d Platoon based on its proximity to 2d Battalion's command post.<sup>14</sup> Because the platoon's strength was down to 24 men from its D-day complement of 46, Severance augmented the 3d Platoon's depleted ranks with men drawn from his company machine gun and mortar sections. A replacement corpsman, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Gerald D. Ziehme, also joined the 3d Platoon as one of its regular corpsmen was unfit for duty.<sup>15</sup> Two teams of stretcher-bearers, each containing four men, also accompanied the patrol; they carried metal Stokes litters as opposed to the normal wood and canvas ones, since they were a more secure method of moving casualties over rough terrain (figure 9.2).<sup>16</sup> Corporal Harold P. Keller saw the stretcher-bearer teams and thought: "We'll probably need a hell of a lot more than that." Already a veteran of three earlier campaigns, Keller suspected a daunting task lay ahead.<sup>17</sup>

## PLOTTING A PATH

In preparation for the main combat patrol's mission, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson dispatched



FIGURE 9.2

*1stLt Harold Schrier (outstretched arm) issues final instructions to a section of the patrol. The man behind Schrier is PhM2c John Bradley. Note the stretcher teams are equipped with Stokes baskets, which were preferable to canvas and wooden litters for moving casualties over difficult terrain.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy SSgt Louis R. Lowery, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

smaller patrols, one each from Companies D and E, to reconnoiter a way to the top.<sup>18</sup> On the morning of 23 February, Sergeant James D. Mulligan led a patrol of approximately 10 men from Company D up the slopes of Mount Suribachi. The group had been patrolling with others from their company around the eastern slopes near the beach when word of their new mission reached them. Due to the steep terrain in this area, Sergeant Mulligan decided it was not possible to continue as a 10-man team. He and others returned to their company lines; however, Corporal John J. Wieland decided to carry out the mission, along with two others.

Accurate details about the actions of Wieland's patrol have been lost to time and the frailty of memory. According to one account, Corporal Wieland was accompanied by Pri-

vates First Class Fred M. Ferentz and Robert C. Mueller. In another account, no mention of Mueller is made, but Private First Class Dale E. Olson is mentioned.<sup>19</sup> Both accounts describe the difficulties of scaling the near-vertical side of the volcano using rifle slings as makeshift ropes. This perhaps explains why Mulligan's original group split up; it was a dangerous journey, and the mountain face could not be scaled by all 10 men at once. With Mulligan's departure, Wieland took the lead of the remaining men as next in the chain of command. The patrol apparently reached the rim of the crater, where they borrowed discarded enemy binoculars to view the U.S. fleet offshore. Wieland and his men then engaged in a brief skirmish with Japanese defenders atop the volcano before descending by the main trail to report to their company commander. Although some Marines dispute this account, Wieland was awarded a Silver Star in recognition for his success in being the first to climb to the summit (see appendix G).<sup>20</sup>

By contrast, the successful ascent of the Company F patrol, whose progress was observed by Marines at the 2d Battalion command post and elsewhere, directly influenced Johnson's decision to allow Schrier's force to begin its climb. That morning, Captain Arthur H. Naylor Jr., commanding officer of Company F, ordered Sergeant Sherman B. Watson to take as many men as needed and reconnoiter a way to the summit, but cautioned that they should avoid contact with the enemy. Watson chose three men—Privates First Class Louis C. Charlo, George B. Mercer, and Theodore J. White—to accompany him on this task (figure 9.3). The small group moved as swiftly as conditions underfoot would allow; Watson recalled later that it was much quieter than they expected and that they encountered no enemy

resistance. Scouting near the top for enemy emplacements, they quickly descended to report back.<sup>21</sup> Since Watson's group could be seen making its ascent without opposition, Johnson directed Schrier to begin his patrol's climb before Watson and his men had returned. He handed Schrier a small American flag and told him to raise it when they secured the peak. In a November 2010 letter to the authors, Colonel Dave Severance recalled that Schrier passed the flag to Private Philip L. Ward to carry up the mountain, but after such a lengthy passage of time it is difficult to now corroborate this statement. Ward does appear in many of Staff Sergeant Louis R. Lowery's photographs in proximity to the flag.<sup>22</sup>

When Schrier received his orders from Johnson and the men replenished ammunition and water in final preparation for their ascent, Staff Sergeant Lowery learned of the plan to secure the crest of the mountain and raise the national colors at its summit. A Marine photographer working for *Leatherneck* magazine, Lowery had covered previous Marine landings and, unlike other combat cameramen, had no specific unit assignment and could go where he pleased. Fate had positioned him near Johnson's command post that morning, and he immediately readied himself to document the events as best he could.<sup>23</sup>

As Schrier and his men moved toward the base of the mountain through Company F lines, the patrol picked up a radioman. Earlier that morning, the 2d Battalion communications sergeant had called the Company F command post, instructing Private First Class Raymond E. Jacobs that he was to switch on his radio set and wait for the patrol. Jacobs was told to report to the officer in command and provide communications for the patrol throughout its mission. It is unclear why Company E did not



FIGURE 9.3

*Members of the reconnaissance patrol from Company F: (standing) PFC Louis C. Charlo and (seated, left to right) Sgt Sherman B. Watson, PFC Theodore J. White, and PFC George B. Mercer, who pose for Army photographer PFC George Burns on the summit of Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, after the first flag raising*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy PFC George Burns, George Burns Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

supply a radioman from its own unit; however, Jacobs recalled later that his company had been wired in to 2d Battalion headquarters since the day prior and, because of this more dependable line of communication, their company radio sets had been shut down.<sup>24</sup>

The patrol proceeded on its way with the sound of distant gunfire ever present, yet there was no resistance from the defenders of Mount Suribachi.<sup>25</sup> Before the men had set out, planes and naval gunfire had bombarded the mountain yet again. All around lay the wreckage

of battle. Damaged and discarded equipment was strewn everywhere. Enemy emplacements showed the effects of the tremendous firepower it had taken to neutralize them. They met no resistance here and no living Japanese combatants were visible, though several enemy dead were passed in places. The Marines were only too well aware from the preceding days that the Japanese had burrowed deep within the mountain. Passing cave entrances, some of the men tossed grenades inside to make sure they did not pose a threat. There was the constant fear that they were heading into a trap. Had Watson and his men been allowed to make their ascent without opposition only for the Japanese to draw this larger patrol in before attacking? If Wieland's small group managed to scale the heights in their sector, had that action alerted the enemy of a more significant American force that would soon follow? It was a real fear felt across the 2d Battalion.<sup>26</sup>

By now, the Americans and the Japanese knew that there would be only one outcome to the battle. General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the Japanese commander, knew he could not win but hoped to inflict such heavy casualties on the Americans that they would reconsider invading the Japanese home islands. Constructing his main defenses across the center of the island, he nevertheless had hoped Suribachi would hold out for 10 days.<sup>27</sup> Yet, on only the fifth day, the Americans were on the brink of seizing this strategic feature through a combination of superior firepower and aggressive tactics. The fanaticism of the Japanese defenders was matched in equal measure by the resoluteness on the American side to overcome the enemy. It remained to be seen just how high a price the Japanese would exact from the Americans for this eight square miles of Pacific real estate. Now watching the advance of Lieutenant

Schrier's patrol from below the mountain, other units within the 2d Battalion were prepared to come to their aid if needed.<sup>28</sup>

## SEIZING THE SUMMIT

It is difficult to imagine how the small band of Marines and corpsmen comprising Schrier's combat patrol felt as they moved warily toward the volcano. With only snatches of sleep and eating simple rations in the main, the previous days' actions had taken a physical and mental toll on the men. They had seen friends die or suffer grievous wounds, but all were aware of the importance of the task at hand. Knowing they were in the toughest fight the Marine Corps had yet faced in the Pacific theater gave them a determination that, if they were successful in capturing the summit and hoisting the American flag aloft, it would reinvigorate those who witnessed it and spur them on to ultimate victory.

As the path grew steeper, some of the men resorted to scrambling on their hands and knees. The climb was particularly tough on those who were burdened with the weight of machine guns and heavy loads. Flamethrower operators Corporal Charles W. Lindberg and Private Robert D. Goode carried tanks with more than 70 pounds of fuel. Inching ever closer to the top, Schrier decided to send out flankers to protect the patrol from possible attack.<sup>29</sup> During their strenuous ascent, cameraman Lowery asked the men to hold up the flag so he could get a photograph, presumably in case they did not make it to the top of the mountain (figure 9.4).<sup>30</sup> The image shows Private First Class Manuel Panizo reaching for the flag held by Private First Class John T. Schmitt. Ahead of them, Corporal Thomas J. Hermanek glances back to witness the spectacle.

Near the summit, Schrier split his force in



FIGURE 9.4

*During the ascent, SSgt Louis Lowery asked that the flag be unfurled lest the patrol failed to make it to the top. PFC Manuel Panizo reaches for the flag being held by PFC John Schmitt. Behind Schmitt, in ascending order, are: Cpl Thomas Hermanek, Pvt Philip Ward (bent over), Pvt Robert Goode, and Cpl Charles Lindberg, the flamethrower operators.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy SSgt Louis R. Lowery and *Leatherneck* magazine

two, ordering some of the men to take up defensive positions around the edge of the crater while others prepared to descend into the bowl of the dormant volcano.<sup>31</sup> Reports tracking their movements streamed in to the 28th Marines' headquarters by radio and by messenger and were logged in their regimental intelligence section (R-2) journal:

*10:15—Troops en masse observed on top of Suribachi led by Lt. Schrier.*

*10:18—[forward landing team] Fr. LT*

*[2d Battalion, 28th Marines] 2/28—Patrol atop crater. States enemy positions are just under rim. That 3 D.P. [dual-purpose] guns exist on left base of volcano. Refuses PR [press] coverage 'til mission accomplished.<sup>32</sup>*

Two former Raiders, Sergeant Howard M. Snyder and Corporal Harold Keller, made it over the rim first. Private First Class James A. Robeson came next carrying an M1918 Browning automatic rifle. What the young rifleman



FIGURE 9.5

*Marines tie the colors to a flagpole using a pipe from a Japanese rainwater cistern. Gathered at the top end of the pole are: Cpl Charles Lindberg, 1stLt Harold Schrier, PlSgt Ernest Thomas Jr., and Sgt Henry Hansen. The radioman is PFC Raymond Jacobs. Pvt Philip Ward holds the pole while the Marine keeping watch is likely PFC Harold Schultz.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy SSgt Louis Lowery, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

lacked in stature, he made up for in his willingness to volunteer for the toughest assignments. Robeson was backed by the patrol's leader, Lieutenant Schrier and his radioman Jacobs. Private First Class Leo J. Rozek and Corporal Robert A. Leader brought up the rear.<sup>33</sup>

With Marines now positioned inside the rim of the volcano, tensely watching for sight of the enemy, the remaining members of the patrol advanced into the bowl. Some searched the ground for material to use as a makeshift flagpole, while others checked cave openings for any sign of enemy attack. A Japanese soldier emerged backward from a cave entrance, and Keller opened fire as the man ducked from sight. As if on cue, other cave entrances came alive with Japanese defenders throwing gre-

nades at the Marines. The Americans responded immediately, tossing grenades and laying down rifle fire in and around the cave entrances.<sup>34</sup> Even as this action occurred, Leader and Rozek found a piece of pipe they deemed suitable for a flagpole. It came from a rainwater cistern built by the Japanese. As Iwo Jima did not have any freshwater at that time, these cisterns, situated all over the island, were an important source of drinking water for the Japanese garrison. The Marines passed the length of pipe to higher ground where Schrier and others waited.<sup>35</sup> Circling the small band of men crouched around the pole, Lowery photographed their progress as the flag was reverently attached (figure 9.5). In contrast to the firefight taking place in the crater, Lindberg recalled how this moment—preparing to raise the first flag—seemed to him, strangely quiet.<sup>36</sup>

Without much ceremony, the small group thrust the flagpole into the soft volcanic ash. They were soon joined by others who helped drive the pole deeper for greater stability. Because strong winds whipped at the flag and threatened to dislodge the pipe from the ground, the Marines jammed rocks against the base of the pole to keep it upright.<sup>37</sup> In many ways, this small group represented the broad spectrum of the 5th Marine Division, a mixture of former Raiders and Marine parachutists and newly enlisted for whom Iwo Jima was their first taste of combat.<sup>38</sup> Hailing from cities and rural farms across the nation—from California to North Dakota, Florida to Washington—all were united in their determination to get the job done and go home to their families. In those few minutes around the pole, the men's chests must have swelled with pride made bittersweet with the knowledge of the sacrifices of others and of the difficult fight still to come.

## JUBILATION ON IWO JIMA

After the flag went up, Lowery continued to capture the scene as the men grouped around the flagpole, many hands firmly grasping it (figure 9.6). Unlike the second flag, which was raised as a replacement in an already secured area, the first flag raisers were aware that the enemy was present, albeit largely out of sight. Nearby, riflemen like Privates First Class James R. Michels and Harold H. Schultz resolutely watched against a possible Japanese counterattack. As a member of this security detail, Robeson steadfastly refused to appear in Lowery's photographs and jokingly referred to his friends as "Hollywood Marines."<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the smiling faces in these photographs reveal what it meant to these men to see their country's flag "unfurled to every breeze."<sup>40</sup> This was the first time a foreign flag had flown over sovereign Japanese territory during World War II, and the Marines appreciated the significance of that fact.

Even so, none anticipated the tumultuous reaction from the shores and ships below when it became clear that the American flag had been raised on the summit. Offshore, crafts of all sizes sounded horns in a salute to this small band of men who had raised their country's flag in a defiant gesture to the enemy. Below the mountaintop, men who could see it cheered and hollered. Some shed tears of joy. Private First Class Charles W. Tatum of Company B, 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, remembered that his unit was in a reserve position close to the beach on the morning of 23 February. Around 1030, Tatum's friend Private First Class Clifford Evanson slapped him on the back, drawing his attention to the small flag fluttering in the distance. He felt immensely proud as shouts of joy echoed across the island. Over the years,



FIGURE 9.6

*In this image, the flagpole has been raised and is being steadied against the buffeting winds. In the background, 1stLt Harold Schrier, Cpl Charles Lindberg (bareheaded), and Sgt Howard Snyder stand. Corpsman John Bradley, Pvt Philip Ward, PlSgt Ernest Thomas Jr., Sgt Henry Hansen (wearing utility cap), and radioman PFC Raymond Jacobs gather around the pole as PFC Harold Schultz watches for signs of enemy activity.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy SSgt Louis R. Lowery, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

many other Marines have remarked on that same moment and what it meant to them. But on Iwo Jima in 1945, the sight of the flag flying was just a brief respite from the perilous task at hand. Enemy mortars continued to drop shells in this area, so Tatum and Evanson returned to work, improving their foxhole.<sup>41</sup>

On the summit, some Japanese reacted to the sight of the U.S. flag by emerging from caves and throwing grenades at the Marines who, in turn, swiftly moved to quell the attack. In an interview months later from his bed at the Bethesda Naval Hospital, corpsman Bradley recalled that "the flamethrowers did a fine job on top of the mountain."<sup>42</sup> With the opportunity for photographs clearly over, the Americans returned their full attention to the business of combat.



FIGURE 9.7

*This photograph, taken by SSgt Louis Lowery after the Japanese reacted violently to the sight of the American flag, shows Pvt Robert Goode burning out an enemy position with his flamethrower. The rifleman accompanying him is likely Cpl Harold Keller.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy SSgt Louis R. Lowery, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

These battlefield conditions underscore the significance of Lowery's photographs. Turning his camera from the flag raising, he photographed scenes of deadly combat as the Marines neutralized Japanese resistance (figure 9.7). Compared with the relatively serene, uncluttered flag raising captured later by Rosenthal, Lowery captured the grittiness and urgency of war. At one point, a Japanese soldier threw a grenade in his direction. Diving to escape its blast, the cameraman slid many yards, damaging his equipment in the process. Reluctantly, he left the mountaintop to see whether he could obtain a replacement.<sup>43</sup> On his way down, Lowery met a trio of cameramen ascending: two Marines and a civilian. Sergeant William H. Genaust was a film cameraman who had been documenting the battle since D-day. With him was Private Robert R. Campbell, a still photog-

rapher, and Joseph Rosenthal of the Associated Press. Lowery informed them they had missed the flag raising, but they should continue on as there was a tremendous view from the top. After this brief exchange of pleasantries, they parted company.<sup>44</sup>

## CAPTURING THE MOMENT

With Mount Suribachi in American hands, this vantage point would be vital as an artillery spotting position to aid the Marines as they continued the advance to the north. Soon, the Marines of Companies E and F were joined by artillery observers with high-powered binoculars and special range-finding equipment. But the flag flying at the volcano's peak also became the focus for others who wished to send a photograph or story back to the American public. After Schrier's platoon had started out on its journey, Marines from Company F, under the command of Captain Naylor, were ordered to the mountaintop to assist in sealing cave entrances and mopping-up operations.<sup>45</sup> One of those present with the Company F force was a young Marine from the Midwest. Pulling a small camera from his pocket, Private First Class Mike N. Mykris decided to take his own souvenir shot of the flag (figure 9.8). Perhaps this photograph represents an instance of "battlefield tourism," but even so, the significance of the flag raising was not lost on the young man who had his Browning automatic rifle shot from his hands on D-day.<sup>46</sup>

Other photographers and correspondents, both military and civilian, were eager to get to the summit of the volcano to get their own "scoop." Among the first of the military photographers to reach the top after its capture were Sergeant Louis R. Burmeister from 28th Marines; Staff Sergeant Meyers A. Cornelius,



FIGURE 9.8

*PFC Mike Mykris, a member of Capt Arthur Naylor's Company F patrol, captured this personal snapshot of the first flag after he and his fellow Marines reached the summit on 23 February.*

Courtesy of the family of the late PFC Mike N. Mykris

the 5th Marine Division Photographic Section laboratory chief; and Army Private First Class George Burns, working for *Yank* magazine. These cameramen set about taking photographs as part of their battlefield assignments; however, the historical record remains unclear as to when they actually arrived. In a written account accompanying his photographs for *Yank* editors in Honolulu, Hawaiian Territory, Burns stated that he traveled with “a platoon from E Co[mpany].”<sup>47</sup> Burmeister likewise asserted that he tagged along with Schrier’s patrol.<sup>48</sup> However, he also may have made his own way up the mountain, tailing Schrier’s patrol, or perhaps joined Naylor’s reinforcement shortly thereafter. Among the photographs taken by Cornelius is a scene of the men inspecting enemy caves and a posed shot of the patrol group beneath the first flag, suggesting that he



FIGURE 9.9

*Photograph taken by SSgt Meyers A. Cornelius showing SSgt Louis Lowery beneath the first flag, which Lowery had documented in such detail. Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy SSgt Meyers A. Cornelius, National Archives and Records Administration*

arrived either during or immediately after the first flag was raised. He even managed to take a shot of Lowery standing close to the flagpole (figure 9.9). Because Burns shot scenes of Marines attacking Japanese caves within the crater that resemble Lowery’s photographs, the Army photographer’s arrival probably coincided with that skirmish. Likewise, the striking similarity in subject and composition among photographs taken by Burns and Burmeister might lead one



FIGURES 9.10/9.11

*(Top) Photograph taken by Army PFC George Burns showing the first flag. Burns was covering the invasion for Yank magazine.*

Official U.S. Army photo, courtesy PFC George Burns, George Burns Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

*(Bottom) Photograph of the first flag taken by Sgt Louis Burmeister, who was attached to the 28th Marines. The Marine holding the Browning automatic rifle is PFC Louis Charlo from Company F, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines. These two photos are so similar in content that it is likely that Burns and Burmeister tailed Lt Schrier's patrol and moved around the summit photographing things of note.*

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy Sgt Louis Burmeister, National Archives and Records Administration

to surmise that the two men accompanied each other in documenting points of interest along the summit (figures 9.10 and 9.11).<sup>49</sup>

Many of those present at the battle had different reasons for wishing to get to the top. One of the most unusual occurrences of the day centered on a Catholic Jesuit priest from the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps. With his assistant James E. Fisk, Father Charles F. Suver made the steep climb, recalling later that they had to take something of a detour to avoid a sentry posted to deter unauthorized persons from going up Suribachi.<sup>50</sup> Only yards away from the flagpole, Suver set up an altar fashioned from sandbags and anything else close at hand. With a battlefield congregation of Marines gathered around him, Father Suver celebrated one of the most unique religious services of all time.<sup>51</sup> Marines took a few moments to pray, giving thanks for their safe passage thus far and to remember those who had fallen. Their weapons, however, were never far from hand as sporadic firing continued to take place.

## THE SECOND FLAG RAISING AND AMERICAN MEMORY

A few hours after the first flag raising, Rosenthal and his companions again captured the scene in the vicinity of the first flag, but they also were fortunate to have timed their arrival to photograph and film the second flag being raised. Genaust and Campbell were aware that the first flag was to be replaced by a much larger one, since both men had been sent up Mount Suribachi by Warrant Officer Norman T. Hatch, head of the 5th Marine Division's photographic section. Hatch had been informed by the division's intelligence officer, Lieutenant Colonel George A. Roll, that the small flag was to be replaced by order

of Major General Keller E. Rockey, the division's commanding officer, who felt it would be better for morale if the American flag could be seen more clearly.<sup>52</sup> Afterward, it also was rumored that Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, upon seeing the first flag on Suribachi's summit, had asked for it as a souvenir but that the irascible commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, was not about to let anyone—even Forrestal—have the flag.<sup>53</sup>

Upon receiving orders from Johnson, the 2d Battalion's assistant operations officer, Second Lieutenant Albert T. Tuttle obtained a larger set of colors from USS *LST 779*, a landing ship, tank beached near the base of Mount Suribachi.<sup>54</sup> Lieutenant G. Greeley Wells, battalion adjutant, remembered that this flag was then given to Company E runner Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon, who was heading to the top with fresh radio batteries.<sup>55</sup> As Gagnon was preparing to depart the command post, he encountered a four-man patrol led by Sergeant Michael Strank from Company E that had been tasked with laying telephone wire to the top. The other members included Corporal Harlon H. Block, Private First Class Ira H. Hayes, and Private First Class Franklin R. Soulesley. It appears Strank gave Schrier this larger second flag and told him the reasons for replacing the first flag with it.<sup>56</sup>

Schrier, adamant that there should be no time at which an American flag was not flying over the island, carefully directed the replacement flag's raising, while the first one was simultaneously lowered to the ground along with the length of pipe to which it had been attached. As Rosenthal took his soon-to-be-famous photograph of the second flag on its upward journey, Genaust filmed the scene, while Campbell managed to take a photograph of the first flag

being lowered (see figure 13.1). Both Burmeister and Burns also claimed to have photographed the second flag as it was being raised but, to date, no pictorial evidence to that effect has been discovered.<sup>57</sup>

Two days later, the American public would wake up to Rosenthal's picture of the flag raising in their Sunday newspapers (see figure 3.3). Lowery's most widely recognized image, by contrast, did not appear in U.S. publications until late March accompanying a story in *Life* magazine, which at least acknowledged that there were two flag raisings on Mount Suribachi.<sup>58</sup> More images would appear in the September 1947 issue of *Leatherneck*, but others would not surface for years.<sup>59</sup> The fact that Rosenthal's photograph appeared on the home front weeks earlier meant that it would soon represent *the* flag raising on Iwo Jima for the American public. As days and weeks passed, popular interest focused solely on those present in Rosenthal's photograph. Official attempts to identify the flag raisers and return them to the United States where they would be hailed as heroes followed accordingly.<sup>60</sup>

While the American public embraced the photograph as a symbol of imminent victory, it would be weeks before those fighting on the island would see the grainy image in newspaper clippings from back home, many not realizing that the scene pictured represented something other than the small flag whose raising had elicited such a memorable reaction in person.<sup>61</sup> Sadly, too few of the men immortalized that day in photographs and on film would live to see the images that Americans back home experienced from the war. Moving to the north some days after the flag raisings, 28th Marines and other units of the 2d Battalion would encounter even stiffer resistance from the enemy in places such as Hill 362A and Nishi Ridge.

The desperate fighting there took a terrible toll on the already depleted ranks of Marines. Raising a flag had not inured anyone to enemy shot or shell. By battle's end, four men from Company E's original 46-man 3d Platoon walked off the island relatively unscathed.<sup>62</sup>

## REMEMBERING THE FIRST FLAG RAISERS

Unfortunately, the delay in publishing Lowery's work and that of other Service photographers made it difficult for anyone connected to the first flag to have their story heard. The reality of the fighting on Iwo Jima meant that many of those who knew the details of the first flag raising (and indeed the second) had been killed or wounded and evacuated. Significantly, some of the intrepid cameramen were among the casualties. On 4 March, Sergeant Genaust was killed in action when assisting other Marines investigating an enemy cave.<sup>63</sup> Sergeant Burmeister was wounded in action on 7 March and evacuated.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, survivors from Schrier's patrol were still fighting on Iwo Jima and more concerned with staying alive than with contributing names to the flag-raising lineup, even after the island had been declared secure on 16 March. There was a sense of apathy among those questioned; as if the event had occurred a lifetime ago.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, all of the attention focused on a photograph of the second flag raising, which did not have the same significance to those who had witnessed the first.

As time passed, those present at the first flag raising attempted to be heard, but it was too late. The Seventh War Loan drive, which ran from May to July 1945, celebrated this second flag raising in such a way that it appeared as if it was the only flag raised that day. No one on the bond drive was associated at that time with the first flag raising. Representations of Rosen-

thal's famous photograph appeared on posters encouraging Americans to continue supporting the war effort. A postage stamp, released in July 1945, reproduced the image in a color similar to *Marine green*, or a dark grayish green. In 1949, the Hollywood movie *Sands of Iwo Jima* further reinforced the idea that the only flag raised on Mount Suribachi was the one made famous by Rosenthal, although the first flag is mentioned at the beginning of the movie. Consequently, when the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial was unveiled in November 1954, some of those who had helped raise the first flag were present but did not receive much media attention.<sup>66</sup> Complicating matters further, the appeal of Rosenthal's photograph and the second flag raising gave rise to a phenomenon where, over the years, many people wrongly claimed some association with the events there, which did nothing to aid those who were genuinely connected with it. Marines such as Lindberg, Ward, and Jacobs attempted to bring their story out from the shadow of the second flag and give the first flag raising the proper historical significance.<sup>67</sup>

The passing of years and difficulty in piecing together various accounts makes it harder for a true and accurate representation to be given, but a continued interest in an event from more than seven decades ago allows the stories of these individuals to be heard even after their passing. Their accounts and recollections have helped shape our understanding of an event that continues to mean so much, but which has been bedeviled by past inaccuracies and misunderstandings.

For a few short hours atop a windswept mountain, high above a desolate landscape where merciless fighting raged, a small group of men shared fleeting moments of joy and gratitude in a brief respite from the difficulties

of fighting on this barren rock. When Secretary of the Navy Forrestal saw the small flag they had raised and photographed there, he turned to Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith and said, “Holland, the raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years.”<sup>68</sup> Mount Suribachi was not captured to raise a flag, but rather a flag was raised to signify, at a critical moment in the battle, that this important feature had been secured by U.S. troops.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 93–136.
2. LtCol Whitman S. Bartley, USMC, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic* (Washington DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1954), 26–27. For a more detailed discussion of the Battle of Iwo Jima, see Charles P. Neimeyer’s essay in this volume.
3. Much of the 28th Marines’ training was devoted to carrying out mock assaults against a hill mass similar to the one they would face in battle. See Richard Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 8.
4. Bartley, *Iwo Jima*, 58.
5. Lt John C. Chapin, *The Fifth Marine Division in World War II* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1945), 10.
6. MajGen Oscar F. Peatross, USMC (Ret), to Albert Hemingway, 31 March 1986, cited in Albert Hemingway, *Ira Hayes, Pima Marine* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 99.
7. Chapin, *The Fifth Marine Division in World War II*, 10.
8. Hemingway, *Ira Hayes, Pima Marine*, 99–100. Hemingway obtained this information through correspondence with Peatross in 1986.
9. For a full discussion of Liversedge’s distinguished career, see Charles L. Updegraph Jr., *Special Marine Corps Units of World War II* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1977), 84–85.
10. John Wukovits, *American Commando: Evans Carlson, His WWII Marine Raiders, and America’s First Special Forces Mission* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2009), 199–200. The Long Patrol took place in November and December 1942. For a more detailed history on the Battle of Guadalcanal, see Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of a Landmark Battle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992).
11. Extract from records of Maj Harold G. Schrier, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO. Schrier was commissioned as a second lieutenant on 2 January 1943.
12. LtCol Jon T. Hoffman, USMCR, *Silk Chutes and Hard Fighting: U.S. Marine Corps Parachute Units in World War II* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1999).
13. Hemingway, *Ira Hayes, Pima Marine*, 99.
14. Severance stated later that he would have been confident choosing any one of the three rifle platoons. The fierce and desperate fighting since landing on 19 February meant that all three of Severance’s rifle platoon leaders were not fit for duty after being wounded in action. Among the wounded platoon officers was 1stLt John K. Wells, commanding officer of Severance’s 3d Platoon. The fact that Col Liversedge had already nominated Schrier relieved Severance of providing a suitable replacement. See Parker Bishop Albee Jr. and Keller Cushing Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi: Raising the Flags on Iwo Jima* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 34–35.
15. Normally, two Navy corpsmen accompanied each rifle platoon, but PhM3c Clifford R. Langley had been wounded on 21 February and would not return to duty until 26 February. Originally assigned to the 27th Replacement Battalion, Ziehme volunteered to join PhM2c John H. Bradley as members of the patrol. See Robert Imrie, “Vet Tries to Prove He’s in Iwo Jima Photo,” *Albany (NY) Times Union*, 18 March 2003. Bradley also confirmed Ziehme’s participation in Schrier’s patrol; however, he erroneously recalled the replacement corpsman’s surname as “Zimik.” See extract from adapted interview with PhM2c John H. Bradley, Box 3, World War II interviews, Archives, Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington Navy Yard, DC, hereafter Bradley interview.
16. No known record exists naming all the men who comprised this patrol and no accurate number has been given for those involved. Most accounts state the strength of the patrol as approximately 40 men, but it is likely that this number refers to the main body and excludes the stretcher-bearer teams.
17. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 130. A former Marine Raider, Keller previously saw service at Midway, Guadalcanal, and Bougainville, where he was wounded in November 1943.
18. Bartley, *Iwo Jima*, 76.
19. John J. Wieland, “Scaling Mount Suribachi,” transcribed by Lowell V. Bulger, *Raider Patch*, January 1980, 11–13. Although Wieland identified the third member of this patrol as Olson, the authors of this essay believe that the 1945 report identifying Mueller is more reliable due to its chronological proximity to the event. Furthermore, Mueller confirmed his presence on this patrol and recounted details of it in a telephone interview with Stephen Foley on 29 October 2015.
20. The story of the Company D patrol has received little attention in postwar discussions of Iwo Jima, even as one account of its movements appeared in *Marine Corps Chevron*, a newsheet printed by Welfare and Recreation,

- Marine Corps Base San Diego, CA, as early as September 1945. *The Raider Patch*, a newsletter compiled by former members of the Marine Raider units, revisited the topic in January 1980. From this latter publication, details about the patrol are furnished by Wieland. The actions of this patrol are not recorded in any official unit records and the men do not appear to have been within sight of the 2d Battalion command post, despite its descent along the same path later taken by Schrier's patrol. Wieland also claims to have returned to the summit later that same afternoon; at which time, he and Ferentz supposedly declined Rosenthal's request to raise the second flag. Details such as this have led some Marine veterans, including Dave Severance, to refute the veracity of Wieland's story. See " 'Heroes of Iwo' Issue Still Rages," *Marine Corps Chevron* 4, no. 35 (8 September 1945): 2; Wieland, "Scaling Mount Suribachi," 11–13; and Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 37.
21. Sgt Sherman B. Watson, quoted in Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 36–37.
  22. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 128.
  23. R. R. Keene, "Louis Lowery Captured Leatherneck History on Film," *Leatherneck*, October 2006, 32–33.
  24. Raymond E. Jacobs, "Sparks on Suribachi," *Marine Corps Gazette* 90, no. 5 (May 2006).
  25. Cpl Charles W. Lindbergh recounts his impressions of the first flag-raising patrol in Lynn S. Kessler, ed., with Edmond B. Bart, *Never in Doubt: Remembering Iwo Jima* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 70.
  26. In a 1993 interview with Parker Albee and Keller Freeman, Severance explained that he thought the Japanese would "shoot the hell out of the four-man patrol," and when that did not happen, he "thought they were waiting for a larger unit." See Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 43.
  27. This was a departure from the traditional doctrine of Japanese military thinking that stressed the need to stop an invader at the beaches with counterattacks or banzai charges. See Bartley, *Iwo Jima*, 11; and Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1994).
  28. Snaking its way upward, the patrol's progress was monitored by those watching below. Severance recounts how he thought he was sending his men to their deaths. See James D. Bradley with Ron Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000), 203.
  29. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 130.
  30. SSgt Louis Lowery, as quoted in Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories and the American Hero* (Harvard University Press, 1991), 45–46.
  31. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 131.
  32. 28th Marines, R-2 Journal, February 19–March 25 1945, entries for 23 February 1945. A copy of this journal was provided to Dustin Spence by PFC Charles W. Tatum, who served on Iwo Jima with Company B, 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, 5th Marine Division.
  33. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 130–32.
  34. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 131. Many scholars tend to omit this earlier instance of Japanese resistance, favoring to cite instead the skirmish that immediately followed the first flag raising. A member of the original 3d Platoon that had landed on D-day, Cpl Richard Wheeler, was wounded on 21 February and evacuated from the island. Many years later, he chronicled the Battle of Iwo Jima. Although he was not present atop Mount Suribachi, he circulated questionnaires among the survivors of his platoon, asking them to provide details of the events surrounding the flag raising as they remembered them. Authors Marling and Wetenhall support this version of events, quoting Cpl Charles Lindberg as saying that there were sounds of a minor skirmish in the cone below as the Marines prepared to raise the flag. See Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 48.
  35. Wheeler, *The Bloody Battle for Suribachi*, 132.
  36. Perhaps Lindberg was singularly focused on the job at hand. See Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 252fn13.
  37. Combat photographer Sgt Louis Burmeister later recalled of his experience atop Mount Suribachi: "What a windy place! It was so windy. Your pants when the wind blew through sounded like flapping. . . . You could hardly talk to anybody, it was so noisy from the wind." See Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 63.
  38. A couple of days after the flag raisings, PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas Jr. gave a CBS radio interview in which he stated: "Three of us actually raised the flag—Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier, our company executive officer, Sergeant Henry O. Hansen of Boston, and myself. But the rest of the men had just as big a part in it." Prompted by the discovery of more of Lowery's photographs, Dustin Spence conducted further research on the first flag raising; his findings were published in *Leatherneck* in 2006 and greatly aided the 2016 Huly Panel investigation into both flag raisings. For an official roster of participants in the first flag raising, see Mary Reinwald's chapter in this volume. See also, PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas Jr. interview, 26 February 1945, Archives Branch, History Division, Quantico, VA; and Dustin Spence, "Unraveling the Mysteries of the First Flag Raising," *Leatherneck* 89, no. 10, October 2006.
  39. Bill Miller, "The Whine of Snipers' Bullets Comprised the Only Opposition," *Leatherneck* 30, no. 9, September 1947.
  40. Kessler and Bart, *Never in Doubt*, 70–71.
  41. Charles W. Tatum, *Iwo Jima: Red Blood, Black Sand—Pacific Apocalypse* (Stockton, CA: Charles W. Tatum Publishing, 1995), 200. For accounts from other Marines' memories of the first flag raising, see Howard N. McLaughlin Jr. and Raymond C. Miller, *From the Volcano to the Gorge: Getting the Job Done on Iwo Jima* (Standish, ME: Tower Publishing, 2011), 61; and Capt Raymond Henri et al., *The U.S. Marines on Iwo Jima* (New York: Dial Press, 1945), 73.
  42. Bradley interview.
  43. Keene, "Louis Lowery Captured Leatherneck History on Film," 33. The timing of Lowery's descent from the mountain is often portrayed as being immediately after the Japanese counterattack, but his photographs documenting this episode mean he was probably there for some time. In *Leatherneck's* archives a photograph is

- attributed to Lowery that shows the flag photographed from an angle whereby he was lying prone on the ground. Whether it was intentional or not, it could be because he was taking cover.
44. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 59. See also, the excerpt from Rosenthal's oral history interview in this volume (appendix E).
  45. Mike Mykris, interview with Stephen Foley, 29 October 2015, hereafter Mykris interview. The effort to secure Mount Suribachi was not confined to one small unit but was a collaboration of efforts within the battalion and indeed beyond it. Such operations were necessary lest the enemy consider reoccupying positions from their subterranean network of tunnels.
  46. Mykris interview. It is not known why Mykris was carrying a handheld camera on Iwo Jima.
  47. George Burns Papers, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.
  48. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 62.
  49. See, for example, images by both photographers that depict the Catholic Mass atop Mount Suribachi and the first flag flying.
  50. Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 53–54. Dave Severance disputes that there was a military checkpoint near the crater.
  51. There is some disagreement among scholars as to the timing of the religious service. Suver was adamant that it took place after the first flag was raised and before the second, recalling that he and his assistant watched the second flag being raised from a foxhole. In *Flags of Our Fathers*, James Bradley supports this timeline with a letter his father wrote home in which PhM2c John H. Bradley penned: "About an hour after we reached the top of the Mt. [mountain] our Catholic Chaplain had Mass and I went to Holy Communion." For information regarding Suver's mass, see James E. Fisk, "Mass on a Volcano," *Catholic World*, January 1949, 312–16; and Bradley and Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers*, 216.
  52. Norm Hatch, "Two Flags," *Leatherneck* 78, no. 2, February 1995, 24. For more on the wartime experience of Hatch and other combat cameramen, see Charles Jones, *Warshots: Norm Hatch and the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Cameramen of World War II* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2011).
  53. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 47. Hatch disputed the account that Forrestal asked for the first flag. He states that Forrestal was a meticulous recordkeeper and also that there is no record of this request in the 5th Marine Division records. See Jones, *Warshots*, 163.
  54. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 48–49. The flag measured eight feet by four feet eight inches. For an in-depth explanation of the origins of the second flag, see Christopher Havern's chapter in this volume.
  55. G. Greeley Wells, "To the Editor: The Man Who Carried the Flag at Iwo Jima," *New York Times*, 17 October 1991.
  56. Richard Wheeler, *A Special Valor: The U.S. Marines in the Pacific War* (New York: Harper, 1983), 383. In his 1946 letter to Belle Block, Ira Hayes recalled that Sgt Strank informed him and the other members of the wire-laying detail that they had received orders to raise a replacement flag when they reached the summit. Ira Hayes to Belle Block, 12 July 1946, Reference Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
  57. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 64–65.
  58. For more on the flag-raising coverage in *Life* magazine, see Melissa Renn's essay in this volume.
  59. Rosenthal personally delivered his film back to the USS *Eldorado* (AGC 11) later on 23 February, where it was put on a seaplane bound for Guam to be developed, checked by censors, and then sent by radiophoto back to the United States. The images by Lowery and other photographers did not move with the same haste. Later publication of photographs by Lowery appeared, for example, in Bill Miller, "The Whine of Sniper's Bullets Comprised the Only Opposition," *Leatherneck* 30, no. 9, September 1947; and W. G. Ford, "Atop Mt. Suribachi with Sergeant Lou Lowery," *Leatherneck* 85, no. 6, June 2002, 52–53.
  60. Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 95–96.
  61. The second flag raising went unnoticed at the time by almost all except those in its immediate vicinity. See Kessler and Bart, *Never in Doubt*.
  62. These Marines included Keller, Michels, Ward, and PFC Graydon W. Dyce. This was typical of all Marine frontline units on Iwo Jima. See Wheeler, *Bloody Battle*, 140; and "World War II Casualty Card Database," Reference Branch, History Division, Quantico, VA.
  63. Genaust's body was never recovered. Years later, expeditions returned to the place where it was believed he died in attempts to recover his remains, but to no avail. See Bill D. Ross, *Iwo Jima: Legacy of Valor* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1985), 284.
  64. "World War II Casualty Card Database." See also, SSgt Matthew Chlosta, USA, "JPAC Investigation Team Returns from Iwo Jima," Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, 6 July 2007.
  65. See, for example, Dave Severance's statement on this subject, as quoted in Albee and Freeman, *Shadow of Suribachi*, 97–98.
  66. Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 169.
  67. Lindberg devoted much of his later life to highlighting the first flag raising. Jacobs, too, tried to have his role in the event recognized considering he had been misidentified in Lowery's most widely known image of the event. See Christy Spahalski, "Marine Vet Recalls First Flag Raising," *Marine Corps Chevron*, 12 March 1982, 3; "He Helped Raise First Flag on Iwo Jima," *Minneapolis (MN) Star-Tribune*, 29 May 1988; Nancy Jacobs, letter to the editor, *Us* 9, no. 8, 22 April 1985; and Dustin Spence, "Unraveling the Mysteries of the First Flag Raising," *Leatherneck* 79, no. 10, October 2006, 34–43.
  68. Gen Holland M. Smith, USMC (Ret), and Percy Finch, *Coral and Brass* (Washington, DC: Zenger Publishing, 1948), 261–62.