

**IWO JIMA**  
**FEB. 23, 1945**  
**FIRST FLAG RAISING**



**An Eyewitness Account By Radioman  
Raymond Jacobs**

In The Beginning..

Captain Arthur Naylor,C.O. F Company,2nd Battalion,28 Marines.

Early morning on Friday, Feb.23, 1945 Captain Naylor called Sgt. Sherman Watson to the CP.He told Sgt. Watson to take a small reconnaissance patrol to the top of Mt.Suribachi to look for enemy troops and positions in and around the top of the crater.

Sgt. Sherman Watson was one of the most experienced NCO's in F Company.He was a squad leader in our 3rd platoon.Watson selected three trusted friends from his squad,Corporals White and Mercer,and a BARman,PFC Louis Charlo.

They moved cautiously up the steep slope of Suribachi and after a look around at the crater rim they fell,slid and climbed down returning to F Co: CPo

Sgt. Watson reported to Captain Naylor that they had not seen any Japanese saying they must be dug in because there were emplacements scattered around the crater.Naylor sent Watson's patrol back to their platoon area and then phoned 2nd Battalion C.O.,Lt.Colonel Chandler Johnson,to pass on Watson's report.

On February 23, 1945 the first American flag was raised on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima, by a combat patrol from E Company, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines led by 1st Lieutenant Harold Shrier.

Today, almost 60 years after the event, inaccurate information continues to be circulated about the identity of the Marines and Corpsmen who took part in the events that day on Suribachi.

The historical record should be accurate and beyond question. At the time we were too absorbed with the enemy for formal introductions and gathering names for the record or photo captions was not a priority. In this essay I will attempt to correct some of the past inaccuracies.

I was the radioman who accompanied that patrol during the climb up Suribachi. I was with the patrol when the first flag was raised and when we put down the Japanese counter attack and secured the top of Suribachi.

In proof of my presence with Lt Shrier's patrol I will present clear and unambiguous evidence from two independent sources.

First, News stories published in the United States just after the 1<sup>st</sup> flag raising. Stories written on Iwo Jima by civilian reporters representing major newspapers and Associated Press. Reporters who climbed Mt. Suribachi and there interviewed me and other Marines from Shrier's patrol shortly after the mountain was secured.

Next, the photographic record of Lt. Shrier's patrol shot by USMC Combat Photographer Sgt Lou Lowery. Sgt Lowery's pictures clearly show me, in my role as radioman, as an integral part of Shrier's patrol.

I will explain how I, the F Company radioman, came to be the radioman with Lt. Shrier's E Company patrol.

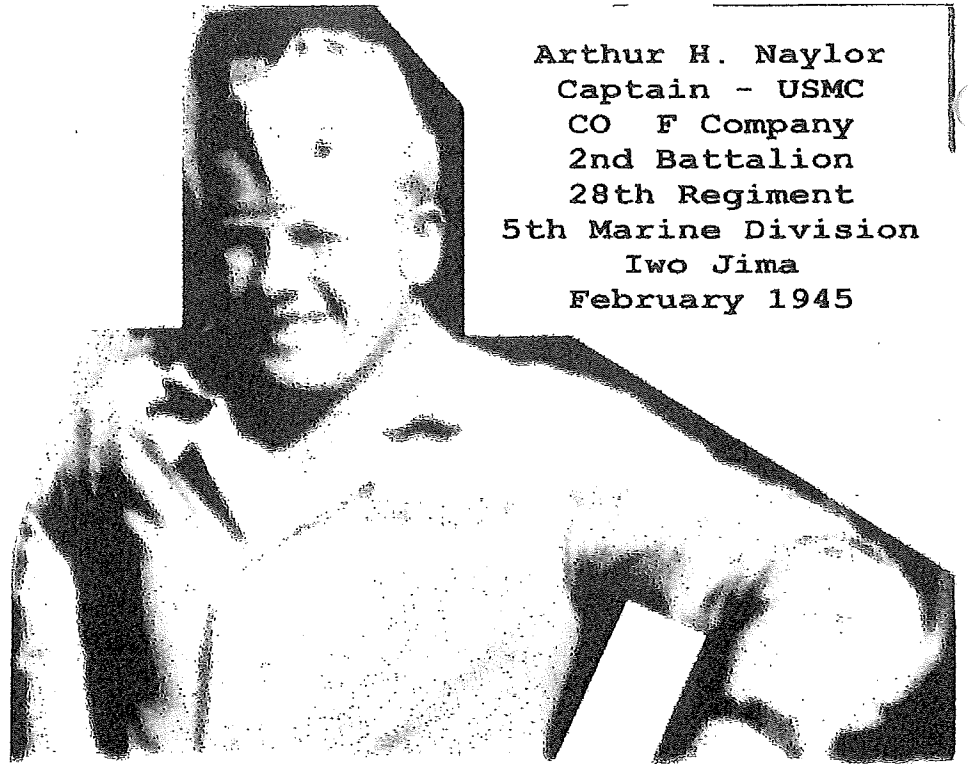
I will also try to shed some light on the decades long errors in identifying the personnel pictured in Sgt. Lowery's photographs of the first flag raising.

In describing the personnel and events of February 23, 1945 I draw on what I saw that day and on the material supplied by two independent and unimpeachable sources.

Raymond Jacobs

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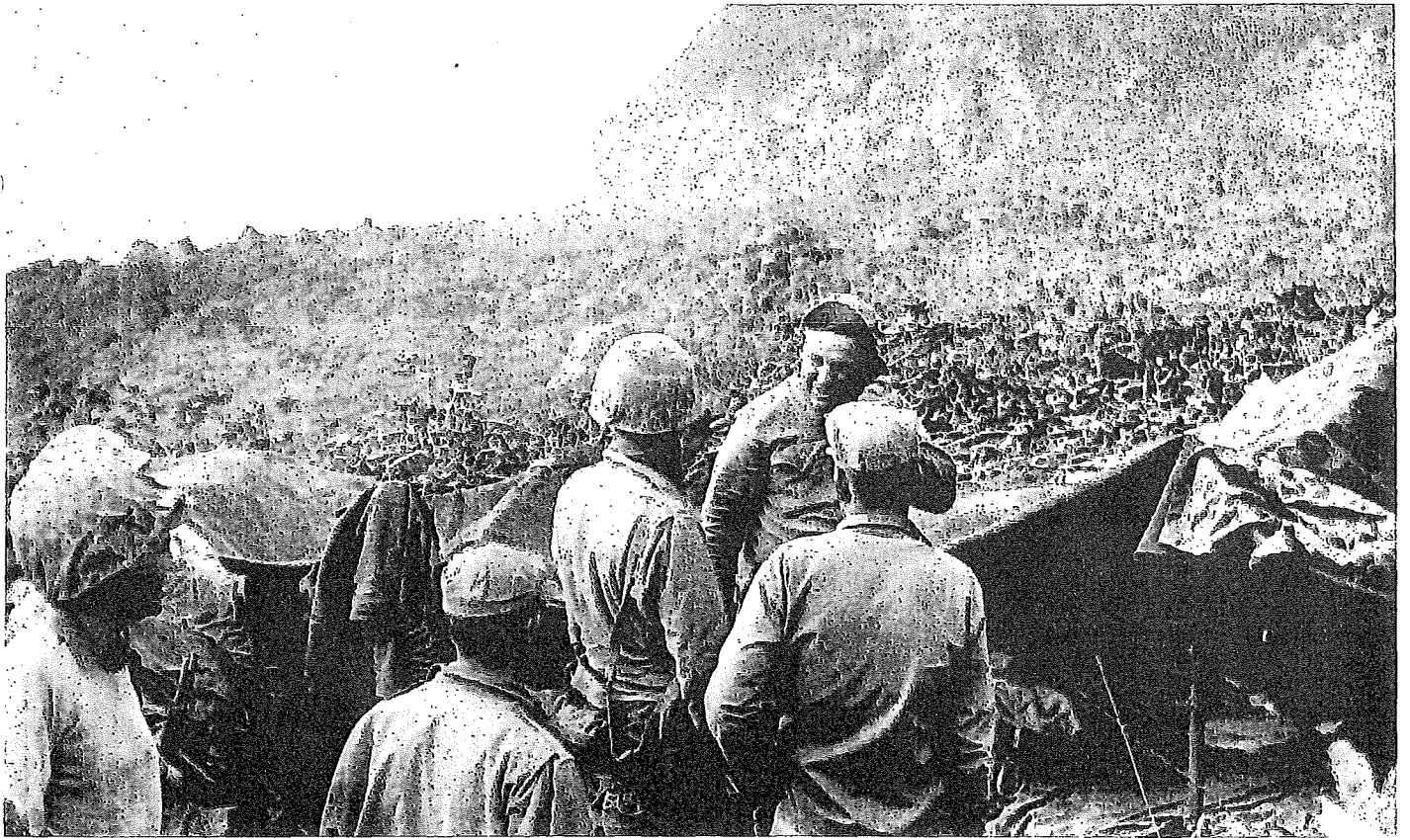
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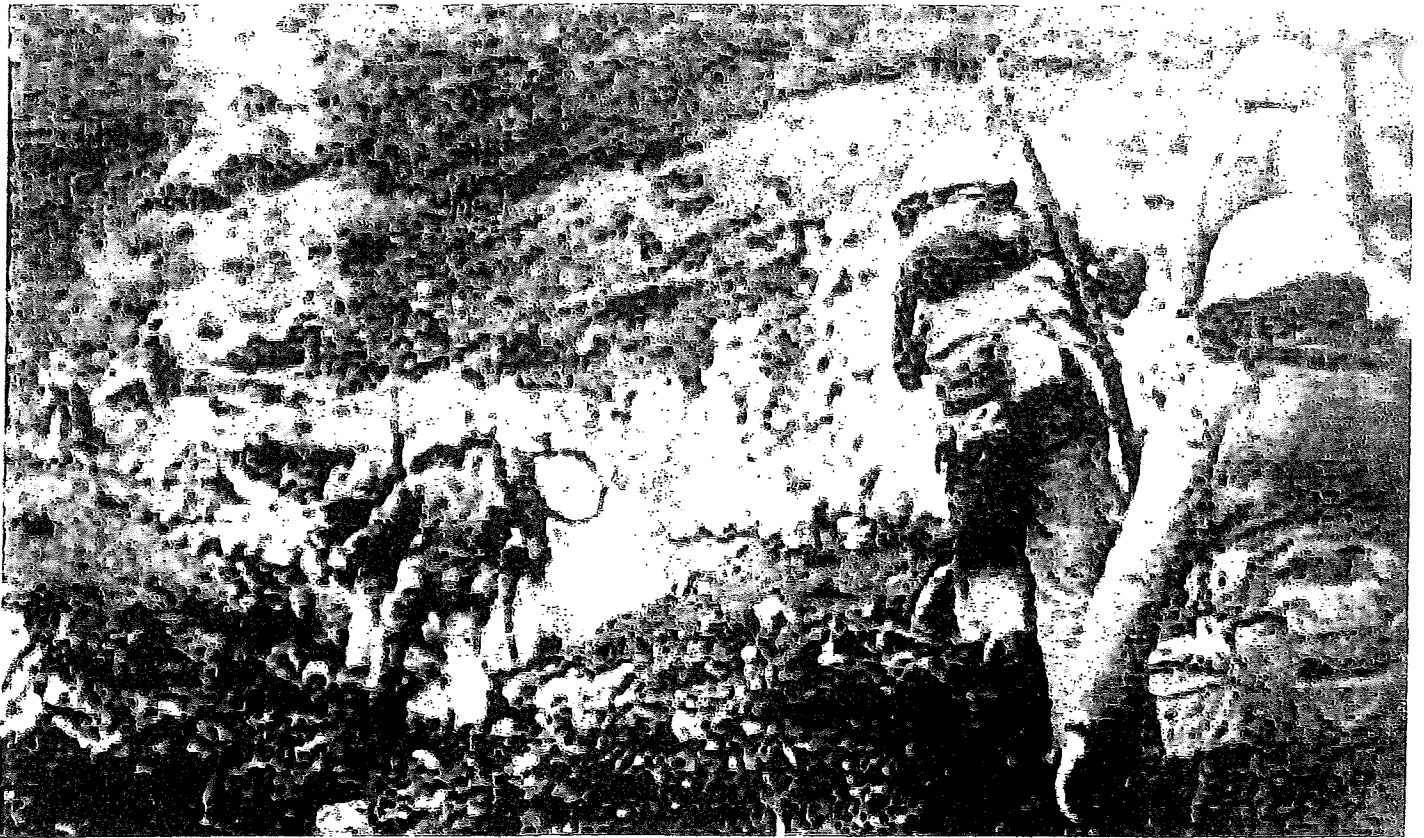
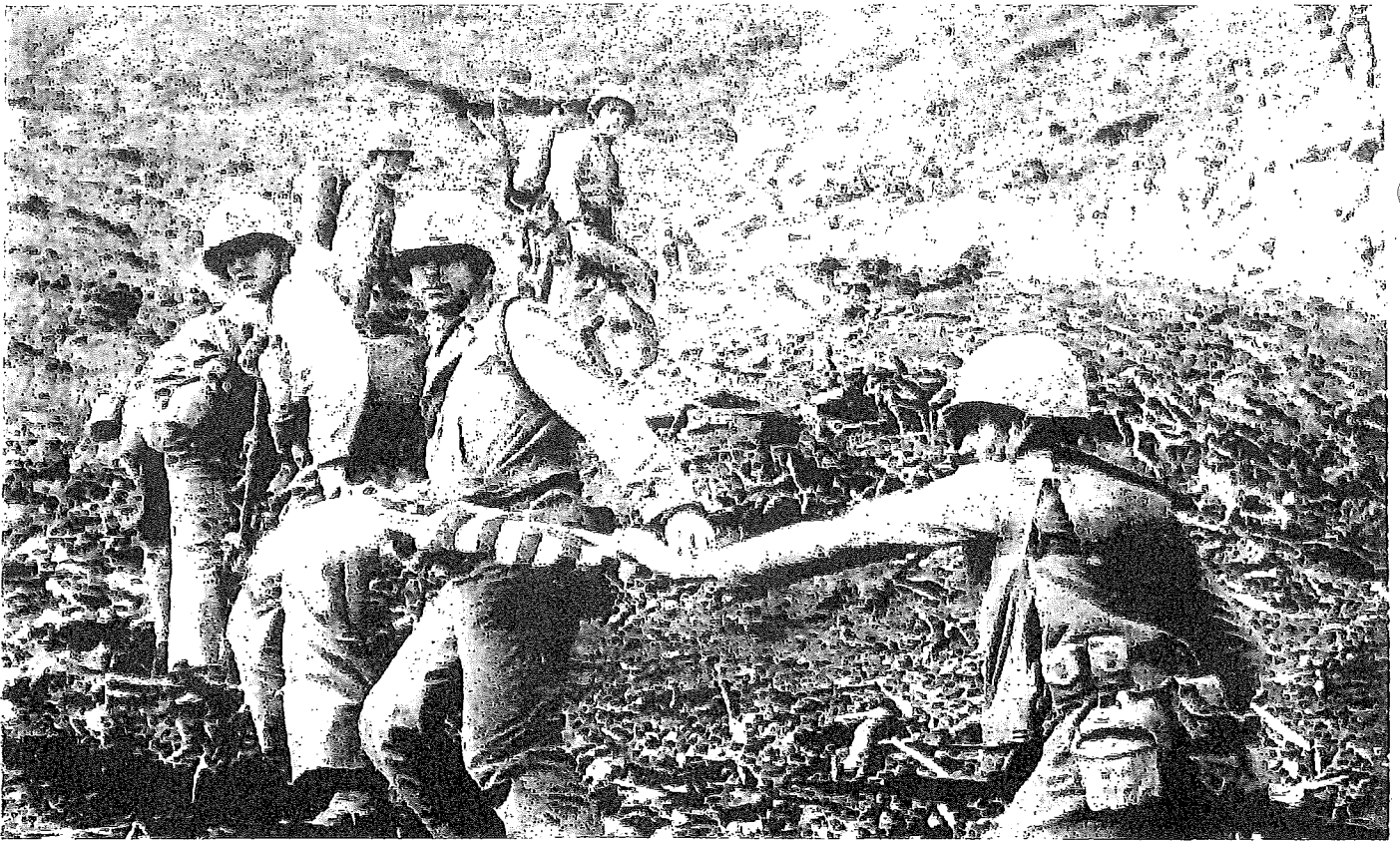


Arthur H. Naylor  
Captain - USMC  
CO F Company  
2nd Battalion  
28th Regiment  
5th Marine Division  
Iwo Jima  
February 1945



Front, L to R - Sherman Watson,  
Ted White, George Mercer. Standing  
Louis Charlo. First 4 man  
team up Mt Suribachi 23 Feb 1945  
Cover photo Pacific Edition of "YANK."





### Taking Suribachi's Highest Point

We reach the top of Suribachi and move quickly along the rim. This is the inner edge of the top of Suribachi's volcanic crater.

Lt Shrier spread the patrol around the inner rim of the crater in a defensive perimeter facing inward toward the center of the crater.

I am in the left of the picture moving along the rim toward higher ground where I see several Marines pulling a piece of water pipe from the ground.

### The Flag And The Water Pipe

The pipe is of Japanese origin probably to carry water to their defensive positions around the crater.

The pipe is holed in several places. Perhaps from shrapnel or rock fragments. Cord is pulled through the holes and the flag is secured.

Tying the flag to the pipe..L to R Pit Sgt Thomas, Lt Shrier, Cpl Lindberg, Sgt Hansen (top of helmet), Unknown(with rifle), Pfc Ray Jacobs.

I have contacted 8 E Company survivors of the patrol sending them pictures of the unknown Marine. No one was able to identify the unknown person from this and other pictures taken by Sgt. Lowery.





## Preparing To Raise The Flag

Lt. Shrier's command group has moved to the highest point on Suribachi's crater preparing to push the flag pole into the ground..

Cpl Charles Lindberg (on the left) is kicking at the ground to clear a hole in the earth for the flag pole.

To the right of Lindberg, the man carrying the large canvas pouches under each arm, is PhM2c John Bradley. Bradley is seen in several of Lowery's photographs but not acknowledged in the official record.

Sgts. Thomas and Hansen are to the right of Bradley. Then we see the still unknown Marine with the double straps across his back.

## The Pole Is Up

The pole is jammed into the ground but is still unsteady. We take turns pushing the pole deeper and kicking dirt and jamming rocks around the base trying to secure the pole.

As you can see the ground here has been torn up by bombing and artillery. This was typical of the sides and top of Suribachi



Our colors are up.... snapping and waving in the breeze.

Just moments after the flag was raised we heard a roar from down below on the island.

Marines on the ground, still engaged in combat, raised a spontaneous yell when they saw the flag. Screaming and cheering so loud and prolonged that we could hear it quite clearly on top of Suribachi.

The boats on the beach and the ships at sea joined in blowing horns and whistles.

The celebration went on for many minutes. It was a highly emotional, strongly patriotic moment for all of us.



## Shrier Talks To Johnson And The Enemy Responds

Shortly after the flag was raised I received a radio call from battalion asking for Lt. Shrier. The Lieutenant crossed over to me and took the handset.

It was Lt. Colonel Johnson. Piecing together one side of a two way conversation, Colonel Johnson was congratulating Shrier on the flag raising. Shrier made a brief report on conditions at the top and ended the transmission.

Moments later I noticed motion below and to my left. Looking over I saw a Japanese soldier dressed in a field brown uniform running out from behind a mound of earth on a lower part of the crater rim.

He slapped the grenade on his helmet and made a quick overhand throw. He then spun around disappearing back behind the mound.

The grenade arced through the air in our direction but fell short of our group. It exploded with a loud bang. A lot of noise but fortunately no one was injured.

The exploding grenade acted as a signal to the enemy dug in and hidden in caves around the perimeter of the crater.....

## We Put Down The Counterattack

The Japanese, apparently enraged by the sight of our colors, hit us with rifle fire and a barrage of grenades. We responded with flame throwers, grenades, BAR and rifle fire. I remember seeing individual Marines and fire teams running toward the caves firing as they ran. We burned and blasted caves on both sides of the crater rim and soon it was over. Intense but brief with Japanese resistance buried.

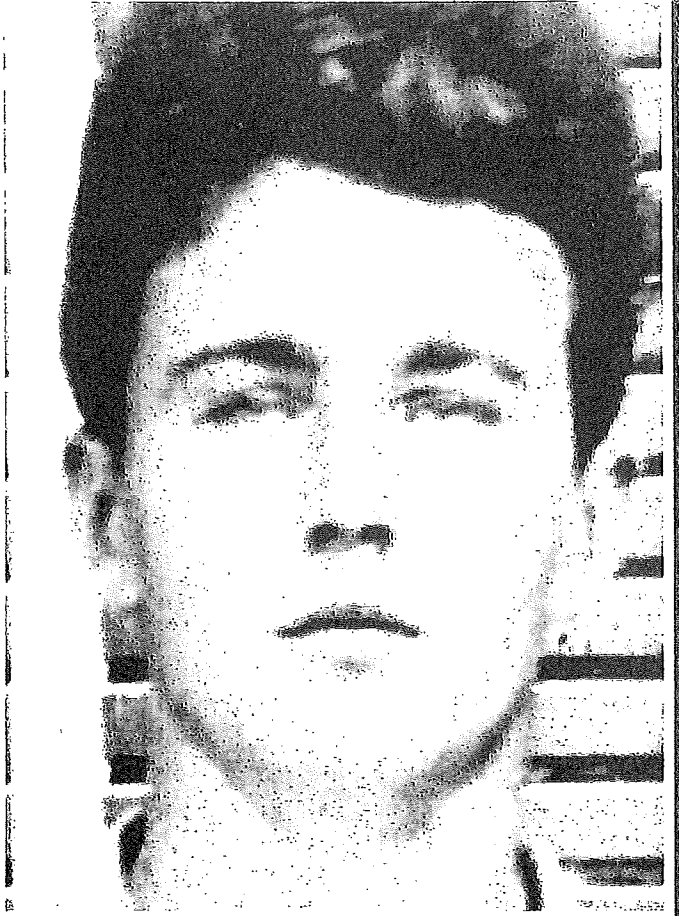
The only casualty on our side was cameraman, Sgt Lou Lowery. He fell over backwards trying to avoid a grenade and picked up some bumps and bruises in a 20 or 30 yard slide down a steep slope over Suribachi's side. His camera was smashed but his film undamaged.

This may be the last picture Sgt. Lowery shot before his fall.

Lt. Shrier and I had moved from the crest of the crater to a position off of the skyline. Shrier controlled his counterattack from this position. From here he made several radio reports to Lt. Col. Johnson at battalion CP including the message that the Japanese attack had been put down and telling the Colonel that Suribachi's top was now secure.

In this picture by Sgt. Louis Burmeister, Shrier is to the right with his back to the camera. My helmet, back and radio are just above his left arm.

At one point Col. Johnson asked Shrier if it would be all right for a group of reporters and cameramen to come up to our position. The Lieutenant approved.







## What's Wrong With This Picture??

This Lowery picture is the most widely circulated and recognized photograph of the first flag raising on Iwo Jima.

Unfortunately, almost 60 years after the flag raising, the captioning information widely distributed with this picture is inaccurate and incomplete.

As recently as this year information handed out to the general public has incorrectly identified the Marines around the flag pole as.....

Left to Right..

Sgt. Henry Hansen (in cloth cap), PFC Louis Charlo (lower hand on flag pole), PltSgt. Ernest Thomas (sitting with back to camera), Lt. Harold Shrier (helmet above Sgt. Thomas), Pfc James Michels (with carbine), Cpl Charles Lindberg (standing above Michels).

Here is the short list of errors in that caption.

- 1 .No serious effort to identify the radioman.
- 2.Pfc Louis Charlo was not a member of Shrier's patrol. The person identified as Charlo is still unknown but it is definitely not Louis Charlo.(more later).
- 3.The Marine usually identified as Lt.Shrier is not Lt.Shrier.That person is PhM2c John Bradley.
- 4.In this picture Lt. Shrier can be found kneeling on the ground behind my legs.When this picture was taken he was next to me using the radio.

The captioning information should read... Left to Right...

Pfc James Robeson (lower left corner), Lt. Harold Shrier (sitting behind my legs), Pfc Raymond Jacobs, Sgt. Henry Hansen (cloth cap), Unknown (lower hand on pole), Sgt Ernest Thomas (back to camera), Phm2c John Bradley (helmet above Thomas), Pfc James Michels (with carbine), Cpl Charles Lindberg (above Michels).



## "The Historical Record Should Be Accurate And Beyond Question"

This is the reverse angle of the previous, more familiar, picture. From this angle we see an additional Marine but we also get a clear look at the faces of the people around the flag pole and thus a more accurate identification of the people actually present.

The caption for this picture should read..left to right..

Cpl Charles Lindberg, Sgt. Howard Snyder (the new face), PhM2c John Bradley, Sgt. Ernest Thomas, Unknown, Sgt Henry Hansen, (in cloth cap) PFC Raymond Jacobs (radioman), Lt. Harold Shrier (kneeling), PFC James Robeson.

This picture corrects many past errors and misidentifications. The proof is in Lovvery's pictures.

John Bradley was there but not acknowledged.

I was there but not acknowledged.

There is one person still unknown.\*\*

Louis Charlo was not there (see the next page).

Lt. Shrier was not holding the flag pole as credited in much of the captioning material circulated with the previous picture but was where he is pictured in this photo...kneeling in front of me using my radio. He was one of those who earlier had actually raised the flag but, unfortunately, that action was not photographed.

\*\*I sent pictures of the unknown Marine to 8 survivors of the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon patrol. No one identified him. Charles Lindberg suggested it might be Phil Ward but could not confirm it.



## Looking For Louis Charlo

Louis Charlo was a 'Good Marine' in the very best sense of that phrase. He was good with his weapon, a BAR, aggressive in using it and intensely loyal to his fellow Marines.

He gave his last full measure to the Corps on Iwo Jima.

Examine the pictures of Louis Charlo on the opposite page. His facial features are distinctive. Yet you will not find him in the two pictures here or in any of the other Lowery pictures of the Shrier patrol because, the official record notwithstanding, he was not with Shrier's patrol.

I knew Louis Charlo. We were in the same company. Had trained together for months and been together on liberty at the F Company hangout in L.A. more times than I can remember. We were not close buddies but we were familiar to each other.

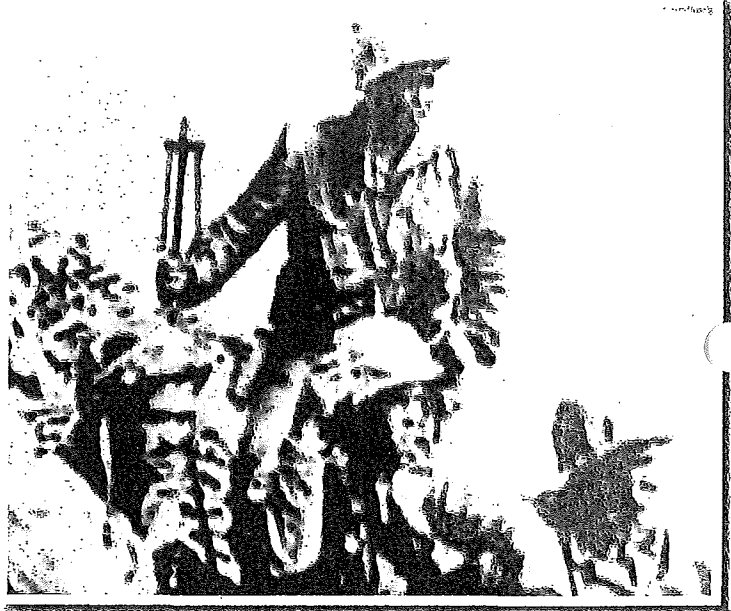
That's why I can say with confidence that Louis Charlo was not with Lt. Shrier's patrol at any time from the climb up Suribachi through the flag raising and securing of the mountain top.

He was, however, one of Sgt. Watson's 4 man F Company patrol which made the early morning reconnaissance patrol to the top of Suribachi. I witnessed Watson's patrol climbing up Suribachi and coming down.

Charlo was mistakenly placed in the Shrier patrol when then Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana confused the news stories of Watson's patrol with that of Shrier's. Mansfield then proudly announced on the Senate floor and to the national press that a constituent of his (Charlo) had helped raise the flag on Iwo Jima.

Mansfield's mistake became part of the official record and lives on to this day.

Correcting Mansfield's mistake would do nothing to diminish Louis Charlo's reputation as a 'Good Marine'. Correcting the official record is simply the right thing to do.



In the introduction to this essay I said that I would prove my presence with Lieutenant Shrier's E Company patrol when we climbed Mt. Suribachi and raised the first American Flag.

I also said I would call attention to decades old errors in the official story of the people involved in the first flag raising.

In support of my presence with the Shrier patrol I have presented two independent and unimpeachable sources.

The accounts of reporters who joined us that day shortly after Suribachi was secured were published in Los Angeles newspapers the next day. They clearly and specifically place me with Lt. Shrier's patrol at the time of the first flag raising.

USMC Combat Photographer Sergeant Lou Lowery took over 30 photographs of Shrier's patrol. In pairing his pictures with personal photographs the resemblance and connection is obvious and unmistakable. I was the radioman in Lowery's pictures.

Again, using Sgt. Lowery's photographs, it is clear that the official record of those present at the first flag raising is in error. The record credits people who were not there and ignores others who were there.

The Marines and Corpsmen who took part in that event should now, at long last, be correctly identified and their roles accurately described.

This time next year we will be approaching the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the flag raisings on Iwo Jima. What better time than now to update and correct the official record of first flag raising and of the personnel who took part.

Raymond Jacobs

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