

**OUTBRIEF RELATED TO
THE 1ST FLAG RAISING ON
MOUNT SURIBACHI,
23 FEBRUARY 1945**

Lieutenant General Jan Huly, USMC (Ret)

13 July 2016

Mission

The Huly Board that analyzed the second flag raising on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, 23 February 1945 reconvened at the direction of the Commandant of the Marine Corps on 05 July 2016 in order to determine the identity of the participants in the first flag raising.

Findings of Fact

FF1. Current official Marine Corps records identify the first flag raisers as:

- a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier
- b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr.
- c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen
- d. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg
- e. PFC Louis C. Charlo
- f. PFC James R. Michels

Sergeant Sherman B. Watson's Recon Team

FF2. Bn Commander, LtCol Chandler Johnson orders Sergeant Sherman B. Watson, F/2/28, to take a recon team to the top of Mount Suribachi early on 23 February 1945.

FF3. Additional members of Watson's team were:

- a. Cpl George Mercer
- b. PFC Theodore White
- c. PFC Louis C. Charlo

FF9. The Watson team returned to the Fox company area to report its findings to Captain Arthur Naylor, F/2/28.

1stLt Harold G. Schrier's Patrol

FF5. LtCol Johnson orders First Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier, E/2/28, to lead a patrol to the summit and raise the American flag.

FF10. 1stLt Schrier's patrol, composed primarily of E/2/28 Marines, arrives on top of Suribachi; A small HQ element (that included PhM2c Bradley) searched for a suitable place to raise the flag.

Raising the First Flag

FF15-FF16. SSgt Louis R. Lowery, 5th Marine Division combat cameraman and *Leatherneck* photographer, takes a photograph of 1stLt Schrier, PltSgt Ernest “Boots” Thomas, Sgt Henry O. Hanson, Cpl Charles W. Lindberg, and Pvt Philip L. Ward tying the flag to a pipe that had been located by Cpl Robert A. Leader and PFC Leo J. Rozek.

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Raising the First Flag

FF15, FF18. Lowery photographs the flag and pole as it is being prepared to be raised. PhM2c John H. Bradley is now in the photo with his back to the cameraman.

FF25. Also in proximity to the flagpole but not touching it is the radioman Cpl Raymond E. Jacobs. In the vicinity providing security are PFC James R. Michels, Sergeant Howard M. Snyder, and PFC Harold H. Schultz.

Why are there no action shots of the First Flag Raising?

FF20. SSgt Lowery paused taking photographs to reload his camera.

FF21. Consequently, there are no known photographs of the flag in the act of being raised.

The First Flag is Raised

FF22. SSgt Lowery, now with his film reloaded, resumed taking photographs of the first flag raisers immediately after the flagpole has been raised to a nearly vertical position.

FF18, FF23. Those individuals who appear in Lowery's photographs and who had clearly just raised the first flag are:

- 1stLt Harold G. Schrier
- PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr.
- Sergeant Henry O. Hanson
- PhM2C John H. Bradley
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Post-Flag Raising Action

FF24. 1stLt Schrier communicates with LtCol Johnson via radio after the flag has been raised. Marines on the beach and on ships celebrate the raising of the American flag.

Post-Flag Raising Action

FF27. Capt Naylor leads a patrol composed primarily of F/2/28 Marines to the summit for security reinforcement.

(We believe PFC Louis C. Charlo was a member of this contingent.)

Raising the 2nd Flag

- Several hours after the first flag raising, 1stLt Schrier contacts LtCol Johnson to request a resupply of radio batteries.
- LtCol Johnson orders Sgt Michael Strank to lead a resupply patrol to the summit and to raise a second, larger flag to replace the first one.
- AP Photographer Joseph J. Rosenthal accompanies Sgt Strank's resupply patrol and shoots his iconic photograph of the second flag raising event.

“Gung Ho” Photograph

- Immediately after the second flag raising, Rosenthal also takes a group shot known as the “Gung Ho” photograph.
- A photographic print of this image, annotated by 1stLt J. Keith Wells, identifies most of the individuals from the Schrier patrol and Strank resupply team.

Opinions

1. The following six individuals raised the first flag:
 - a. 1stLt Harold G. Shrier
 - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr.
 - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen
 - d. PhM2c John H. Bradley
 - e. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg
 - f. Pvt Philip L. Ward

Opinions

2. The following individuals did not raise the first flag as previously indicated in the official historical record of the Marine Corps:

- a. PFC Louis C. Charlo
- b. PFC James R. Michels

3. PFC Charlo was a member of the recon team prior to the first flag raising and returned to the summit as security reinforcement prior to the second flag raising.

4. PFC Michels provided security in the immediate vicinity of the event.

5. PFC Michels was previously identified as a flag raiser due to his prominent position in one of SSgt Lowery's photographs of the event.

Opinions

8. Additional individuals may have been present on the summit during the flag raising events on 23 February 1945, but they cannot be identified due to insufficient evidence.

Recommendations

1. That the records of Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps reflect the identification of the individuals in the first flag raising as follows:
 - a. 1stLt Harold G. Schrier
 - b. PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr.
 - c. Sgt Henry O. Hansen
 - d. PhM2c John H. Bradley
 - e. Cpl Charles W. Lindberg
 - f. Pvt Philip L. Ward

Recommendations

2. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should inform the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and Medical Officer of the Marine Corps of the results of this panel before they are made public.

3. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should inform the appropriate relatives of 1stLt Harold G. Schrier, PltSgt Ernest I. Thomas, Jr., Sgt Henry O. Hansen, Cpl Charles W. Lindberg, PFC Louis C. Charlo, PFC James R. Michels, Pvt Philip L. Ward and PhM2c John H. Bradley of the results of this panel before they are made public.

Recommendations

4. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps should issue a public statement regarding the correct identification of the first flag raisers.
5. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps recognize that all previous efforts at identification were conducted in good faith and that no official blame be assessed for previous inaccuracies in the historical record.
6. That the Commandant of the Marine Corps direct that this panel report and associated records be deposited in the Marine Corps History Division's archives.

Recommendations

7. That the Office of Legislative Affairs should inform appropriate Members of Congress and congressional staff of the results of this panel before they are made public.

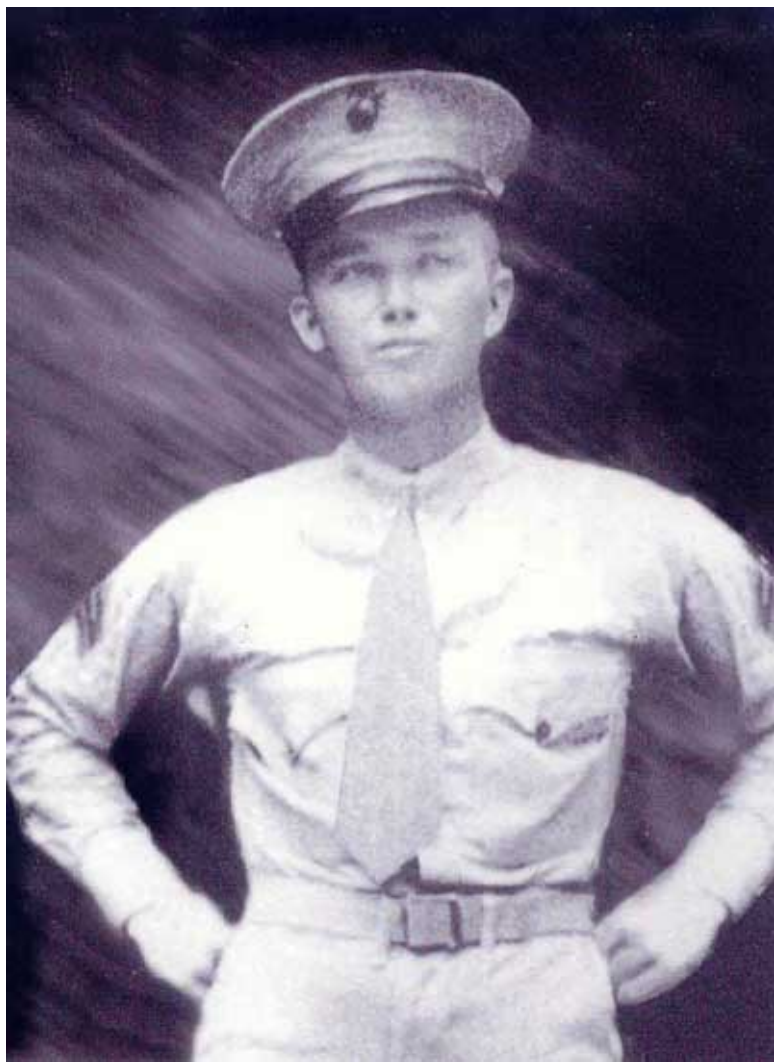
8. That Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps should make public the findings of this panel.

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

Comparison Photographs with Known Portrait Identifications



1stLt Harold G. Schrier



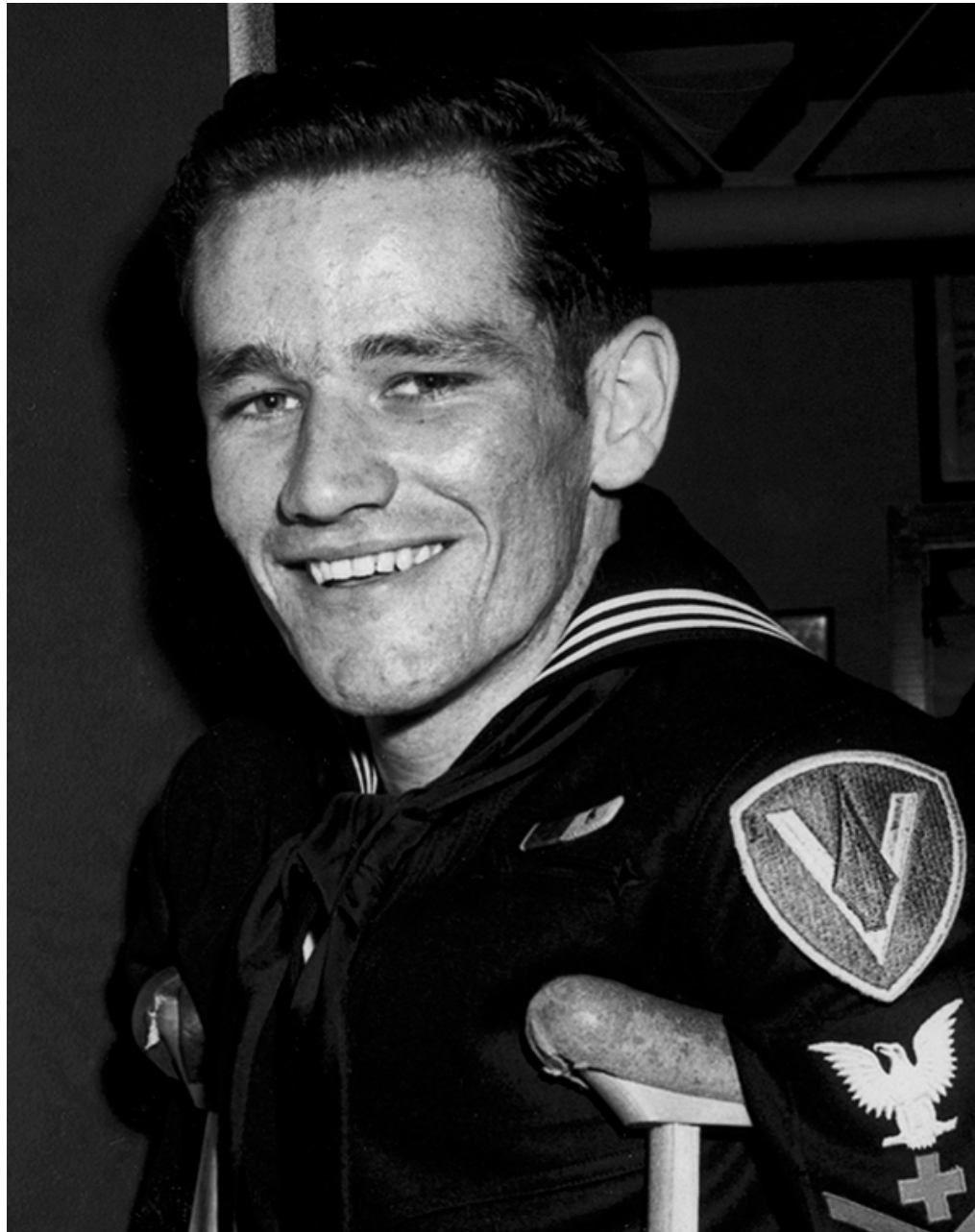
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