

\$19.50

67th Anniversary Iwo Jima Reunion of Honor

March 9 - 16, 2012

Edited by Ray Elliott, Communications Director, Iwo Jima Association of America



Published by



**Iwo Jima
Association of America, Inc.**

www.IwoJimaAssociation.org

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Additional copies: \$19.50 (includes postage & handling

IJAA

13198 Centerpointe Way, Ste. 202

Woodbridge, VA 22193

703-590-1295

On the cover: The island of Iwo Jima, as seen from those aboard a United Airlines flight during the March 2012 Reunion of Honor Tour, organized by Military Historical Tours. Photo by LtCol Aisha Bakkar, Public Affairs Officer, Marine Corps Activity - Guam.

Other photos by Ray Elliott and courtesy of LtCol Bakkar, Gail Chatfield, Thomas Kuhns, Tammy Miller, Craig Painton, Kathy Painton, John Powell, Rudy Rodriguez and Anne Swenson.

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Fellow Iwo Jima Veterans, Families and Friends,

Our good friend and IJAA Communications Director, Ray Elliott, assembled this great pictorial of our March 2012 Iwo Jima "Reunion of Honor." I hope you like it and that it brings back fond memories of our sojourn to Guam and Iwo Jima. IJAA has paid for the printing and postage, and I hope that you will help us defray this cost by sending us a "fully tax-deductible" contribution to the Association. Please use the enclosed envelope and consider adding a little extra to help defray the cost of the Reunion of Honor for some of our veterans who can't afford this long trek!

For your friends who could not make it this year, as you can see from the stationery, there will be two major IJAA events next year. The first is our annual February Iwo Jima Reunion and Symposium in Alexandria, Va. The second is the 68th Anniversary of the battle on the "Black Sands" at the annual Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima. In contrast to the past, we will only have one chartered 737 airplane next year and "he who hesitates" may lose a seat. It's not too early to get signed on. You can always cancel later, since we always have a waiting list. However, once the seats are gone, they're gone!

The good Lord willing, I will lead this annual pilgrimage back to Iwo Jima next March, through Los Angeles, Honolulu and Guam. As usual, we have scheduled side trips to Saipan and Tinian, another of my battlegrounds, as well as Peleliu and Hawaii, before starting home.

I look forward to seeing many of you at these IJAA events. Should you not be a member, I'm enclosing an application for you to fill out and return.

Warm, sincere regards and ... Semper Fidelis,



Lawrence F. Snowden
LtGen USMC (Ret)
Chairman Emeritus

P.O. Box 680, Quantico, VA 22134

Phone (703) 212-8128 * Fax (703) 590-1292

E-mail: Director@IwoJimaAssociation.org * www.IwoJimaAssociation.org

~ 1 IJAA is an IRS 501 (c) (3) tax exempt association

Departure from Los Angeles

For the seventh consecutive year, the Riverside I & I Marine Corps Color Guard posts the colors prior to departure from Los Angeles of the Military Historical Tours' trip to Iwo Jima and sets the stage for the an-

nual "Reunion of Honor" to commemorate the 67th Anniversary of the World War II battle on the island. The Los Angeles International Airport Transportation Safety Administration Choir serenades Iwo Jima veter-



ans and travelers with patriotic songs as they prepare for the departure for Guam. A traditional cake with the iconic photo of the flag raising on Mt. Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945, is served with coffee and juice.

Iwo Jima Association of America Chairman Emeritus LtGen Lawrence F. Snowden, USMC (Ret.), addresses the group during an earlier orientation for the trip. He was the company commander of Fox Com-

pany, Second Battalion, 23rd Regiment, Fifth Marine Division during the battle.

Japanese linguist and historian Dan King chats with MHT staff member John Edwards, author and retired Marine Col Richard “Dick” Camp and staff Nurse Lucille Katavich during the sendoff.

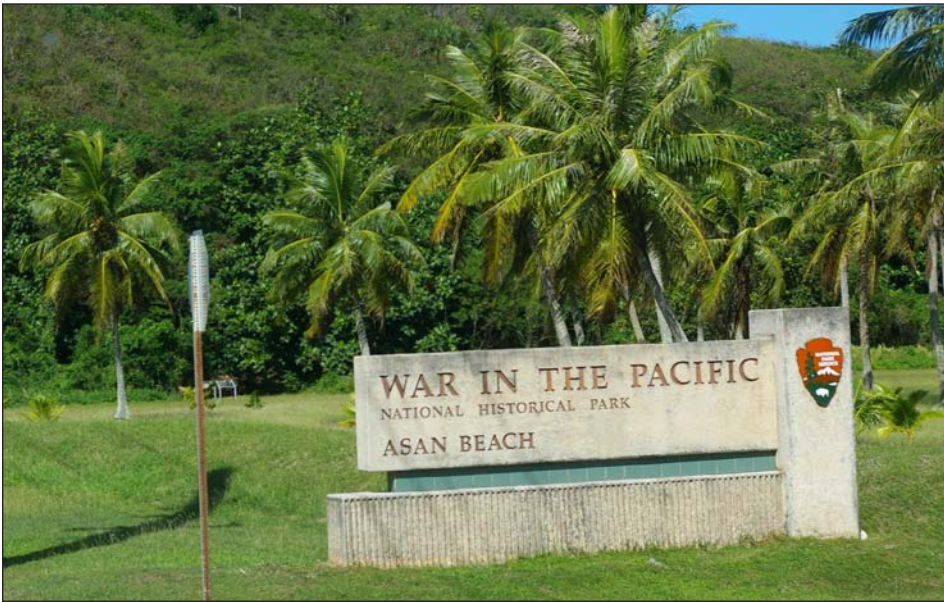
As the United Airlines plane prepares for departure, the LAX Fire Department honors the Iwo Jima veterans with a traditional fire hose salute.



Guam

Hafa Adai (pronounced HALF a-DAY) is “Hello” in Chamorro, the native language of Guam and the islands of the Northern Marianas. It’s a welcome greeting after the long flight from Los Angeles, a brief stop in Honolulu, then on to Guam where the travelers check into the Outrigger Hotel on the beachfront at the Tumon Bay resort district.





Asan Beach

The War in the Pacific Historical Park at Asan Beach was a primary landing site for the Third Marine Division on July 21, 1944, during the Liberation of Guam from the Japanese in World War II. The battle lasted until Aug. 10, 1944. Today the beach is a peaceful, tropical paradise with a mounted gun before the flag poles, statues and memorials to remember the carnage the Marines faced during the invasion. Young Marines pose for a photo before the monument.



Nimitz Hill

RAdm Paul J. Bushong, USN, Defense Representative Guam, addresses the veterans on Nimitz Hill overlooking Asan Beach. The veterans later pose with the admiral and Marine Col Robert Loynd, Marine Forces Pacific (Fwd) Guam and CNMI for a photo. Guide Don Farrell poses with Pamela Marvin (below right), widow of actor Lee Marvin, a Fourth Marine Division veteran of Saipan. George Cattelona and Jim Murphy are pictured below.



Chamorro Culture Village

Gef Pa'go is a Chamorro cultural village that was formed in 1992 and is located on the shores of Inarajan Bay. After watching local Chamorro villagers demonstrate traditional crafts and folk practices, members of the tour group are treated to Chamorro food at a buffet lunch, while local youth performed traditional dances. The village consists of dining area and stage for the performances, eight thatched huts and a gift shop. The village exists as a living museum that employs traditional crafters and folkways practitioners to show tourists and to teach local residents how it was in the past. Life changed a great deal after the war. Some people at the village remember how life was before the war and live nearby. Young Marines, other members of the tour group and veterans listen as villagers explain crafts and customs.



Jeff's Pirates Cove



Young Marines National Exec. Dir.
LtCol Mike Kessler, USMC (Ret.)



Pirates Cove owner Jeff Pleadwell (second from right) takes a photo with travelers, including Jim Murphy and Joe Mueller.



War Dog Memorial

At the War Dog Memorial on Guam, a Doberman Pinscher represents hundreds of heroic war dogs that served in the Marine Corps during World War II. Although most were Dobermans, German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers and even a Collie also served during the war as sentries, messengers and scouts. Two active-duty Air Force dog handlers were at the memorial with their dogs to demonstrate that dogs are still in service.



Iwo Jima Symposium

Veterans talk about their war experiences on a panel during the Iwo Jima Symposium at the hotel. Many of them signed a poster of the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi. Marine LtCol Aisha Bakkar poses with Clyde Jackson during a break in the symposium.



Left to right is Lester Carlyle, Billy Griggs, John Huffhines and Ira Rigger



Young Marines and active-duty Marines at the Iwo Jima Symposium.



Foreground: Ira Rigger; background: Billy Griggs



George Cattelona



Clyde Jackson



Irwin Kuhns Jr.

Banquet

The banquet the night before the day-long trip to Iwo Jima brings everyone together for dinner. Guam Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo was the evening's keynote speaker. Active-duty Marines and other military personnel attended the banquet, as well. Below at left, John and Mary Huffhines. Below, back row from left to right, are LtCol Aisha Bakkar, Capt Dale Dye, USMC (Ret.), LtCol Haynesly Blake, and Debra and Col Robert Loynd.



At right is Historian Don Farrell, IJAA Chairman LtGen Hank Stackpole, USMC (Ret.), and wife Vivien. Below right is LtCol Aisha Bakkar, Annette Donner and Pamela Marvin. Below, Rep. Bordallo speaks before dinner is served.

The event is an opportunity for the entire tour group to get together and share stories about the various excursions people have chosen to experience on the trip.



Iwo Jima

Flight details for Iwo Jima are displayed at the airport on the morning of March 14. Pilots circle the island for a look from the air prior to landing at the airstrip in the north end. Bottom photo shows Mount Suribachi at the extreme left. Landing beaches, beginning with Green, are just to the right of the inactive volcano. Next page, looking at Mount Suribachi from the north end, then deplaning after landing and being met by active-duty Marines from Okinawa, deployed to assist the visitors in getting around the island.



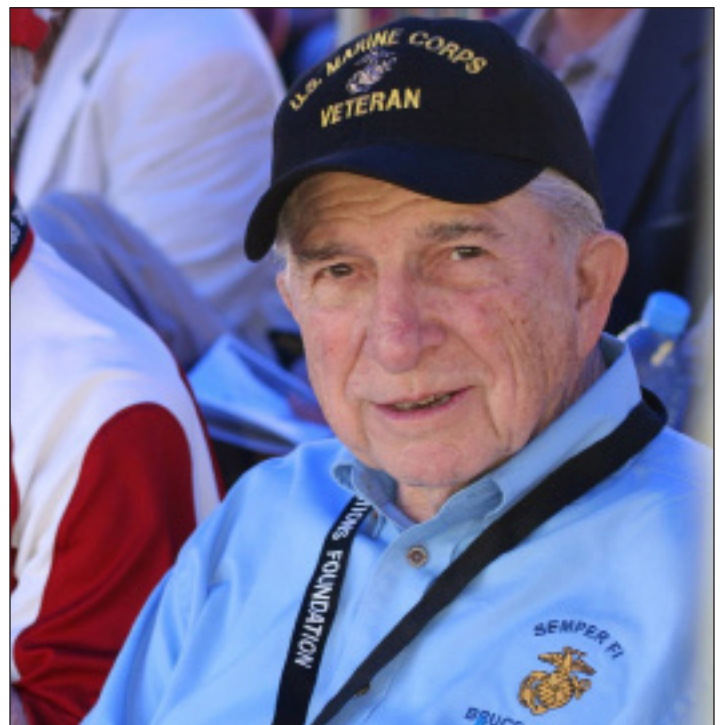




Lewis Seago



SgtMaj "Iron Mike" Mervosch



Bruce Heilman



Lester Carlyle



Abraham Eutsey



Joseph LaNier



Ira Rigger



At left is Jim Baize, and at right is Bruce Heilman



LtGen Hank Stackpole (center) and others stand for the National Anthem.

Reunion of Honor Ceremony

The III Marine Expeditionary Force Band and the Color Guard set the stage for the ceremony for which both the Japanese and American contingents make the annual pilgrimage to the remote island 650 miles southeast of Tokyo where the two countries were locked in mortal combat during World War II 67 years ago. The “Reunion of Honor” ceremony gives both the Japanese and the Americans the opportunity to gather and honor the nearly 30,000 men who lost their lives and another 20,000 who were wounded in the fierce battle. The annual reunion takes place near a plaque that was placed there in 1985, the 40th anniversary of the Iwo Jima battle. The plaque commemorates the battle ~ one side in English, which faces the beach where the Americans landed and the other side in Japanese facing inland where they defended the island.

Speaking at the ceremony are Marine LtGen Kenneth J. Glueck Jr., commanding general of the III Marine Expeditionary Force, and Yoshitaka Shindo, grandson of LtGen Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the Japanese commander of Iwo Jima who orchestrated the defense of the island that departed from the previous Japanese defense strategy of hitting the landing force at the beach. In the bottom photo the Japanese contingent lines up in preparation for a wreath-laying ceremony each side does to honor the sacrifices of those who fought and died on the island. Marines bring the wreaths for the American portion of the ceremony (on the next page).





LtGens Snowden (left) and Stackpole





Lester Carlyle is greeted by Yoshitaka Shindo.



Dr. Suzanne Frye



Darrell Mason

After the ceremony, participants are lost in private thoughts, and those on each side express peace to each other, cementing the positive relationship of the two countries that has grown strong in the years that followed. LtGen Lawrence Snowden (at right), senior Iwo Jima veteran, a company commander during the battle talks with the grandson of his former enemy.





Cadets from the Virginia Military Institute pose with RAdm Paul J. Bushong.



From left: Dan King, Yoshitaka Shindo and IJAA Senior Vice President Bonnie Haynes



Iwo Jima veterans pose for a photo after the ceremony, including, at far left, Clyde Jackson, as well as Jack Thurman (middle), Jim Blaize (second from right) and Mike Mervosh (far right).



Japanese flag returned during ‘Reunion of Honor’

LtGen Lawrence Snowden, F/2/23 company commander during the Battle of Iwo Jima and IJAA chairman emeritus, returns a Japanese flag to Yasuori Nishi, president of the Iwo Jima Association of Japan and son of Baron Nishi, equestrian show jumper and the Olympic Gold Medalist at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. Ruth Steffens, widow of Iwo Jima veteran Ernie Peterson (HQ/4/13) and Fifth Marine Division Association Life member found the flag after her husband’s death and asked that it be returned to the Japanese family, if possible. It was thought that Peterson brought the flag home from Iwo Jima since that was his only campaign during the war. But when the flag was taken to Japan for a regularly scheduled ceremony at the Yasukuni Shrine, located in

Chiyoda, Toyko, it was learned that the flag wasn’t that of a Japanese Iwo Jima veteran. According to Dan King, Japanese linguist and historical consultant who had translated the writing on the flag, “They say the Japanese soldier whose flag this once belonged to didn’t die on Iwo Jima. The name ‘Kenzo Matso’ is not found on their Iwo Jima war-dead roster. Ernie was stationed in Nagasaki during the Occupation of Japan and apparently got the flag there.” Mr. Nishi wrote that it has been “decided to enshrine the flag, which made it home 67 years after the war, at the War Museum (Yushukan) of Yasukuni Shrine. Through the good office of Chief Priest Ichihashi, it became an official part of their collection on May 23 to tell the story and give lessons of war forever.”

Haynes Memorial



Prior to his death Iwo Jima veteran and author MajGen Fred Haynes, USMC (Ret.), requested that his ashes be spread on the Black Sands of the landing beaches “to mix with the blood of the Marines who died there.” Family and friends gathered with the general’s widow Bonnie Arnold-Haynes and two nephews to honor his request and hold a brief memorial service. The three pose with Kuribayashi’s grandson after the Reunion

of Honor. On the beach at the water’s edge, Bonnie pauses privately and prepares to spread some of the ashes.



Mount Suribachi

At the memorial on the top of Mount Suribachi, where both flags were raised on Feb. 23, 1945, one can look north along the landing beaches and see the defensive superiority of the position. Undoubtedly the most popular place to visit on the island, people pose for photos with each other, stretching flags out at or near where the originals were raised. Marines re-enlist nearby and Marines, young and old, leave dog tags on a post as a symbol of honor and Young Marines pose with the flag on the top of Mount Suribachi.



Walt West



From left: Jim Murphy, LtGen Stackpole, Joe Mueller and James Stephens





Nicholas Weidenkopf





LtGen Lawrence Snowden is interviewed near where he landed 67 years ago by LtCol Aisha Bakkar for a video to be posted on YouTube. Veterans and others roam the beaches remembering where they fought, listening to anecdotes of the battle, marching along the road or picking up black sands from the beach to take back home. Futatsu Rock marks the division between Red Beach One and Red Beach Two, landing beaches of the 26th and 27th regiments.



Kathy Painton and Capt Dale Dye



George Cattalona and a vet from the Ambrose group.





Young Marines hike along the west side of the island.



John Huffhines



Farewell Reception at Pacific War Museum

Traditionally, on Guam on the last night of the tour, everybody gathers at the Pacific War Museum originated by the late John Gerber, Marine Vietnam veteran, for the Fiesta Dinner and Farewell. The dinner is hosted by the Third Marine Division Association and will continue

by Gerber's family, in honor of his wishes. Besides great food and entertainment, everybody dances and poses for pictures.

Pictured below from left to right are LtGen Hank Stackpole and MHT President and CEO and IJAA Executive Vice President Col

Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (Ret.); Pamela Marvin with LtCol Bakkar's daughter, Abigail Hempel; Victoria Perez, Young Marine of the Year; and LtCol Mike Kessler, Young Marines national executive director, with MHT Chief of Operations LtCol John Powell, US Army (Ret.).



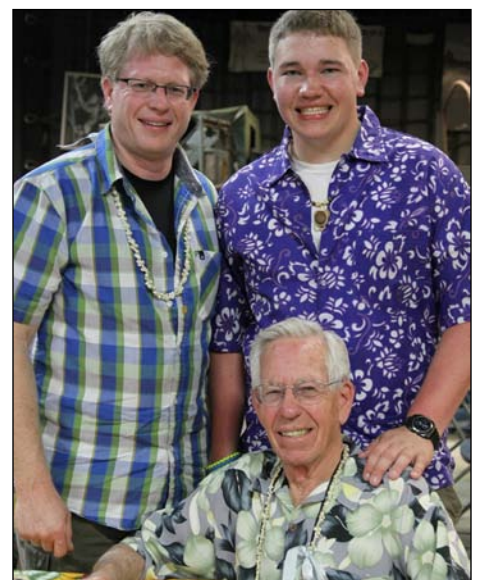


Col Robert Loynd and Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz

Lucille Katavich & George Cattalona



Tammy Miller



Three generations of the Dihle Family



Walt West

REUNION OF HONOR

ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA, AMERICAN AND JAPANESE VETERANS MET AGAIN ON THESE SAME SANDS, THIS TIME IN PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP.

WE COMMEMORATE OUR COMRADES LIVING AND DEAD, WHO FOUGHT HERE WITH BRAVERY AND HONOR, AND WE PRAY TOGETHER THAT OUR SACRIFICES ON IWO JIMA WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AND NEVER BE REPEATED.

FEBRUARY 19, 1985

3RD, 4TH, 5TH DIVISION
ASSOCIATIONS: USMC
AND
THE ASSOCIATION OF IWO JIMA

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