

Raising America's flag on Iwo Jima during WWII

BY CPL. SHAWN DICKENS
Chevron staff

February marks an important time in the Marine Corps and the Navy's history.

On February 23, 1945, the men of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, and a Navy corpsman raised the American flag at the summit of Mt. Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima. According to then Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, this moment guaranteed a Marine Corps for the next five hundred years.

The first flag raising was an important event that marked the capture of an island that was the turning point in the second World War. But it was photos of the second flag raising that would be remembered for years to come.

If you ask any stranger on the street to point out Iwo Jima on a map they probably couldn't do it. But if you show them the picture of the flag raising they are more than likely able to tell you what it is.

The image of those six men, Marines, Sgt. Michael Strank, Cpl. Harlon Block, Cpl. Rene Gagnon, Cpl. Ira Hayes, Pfc. Franklin Sousley and their Navy corpsman, Pharmacists' Mate 2nd Class John Bradley, has become not only an icon of American triumph during the war, but also a

symbol of the Marine Corps over the years.

As a former corpsman, I know what it is like to be in the thick of it with your brother Marines and know that you rely on each other to make it through the hardships you experience in combat. You truly are a team.

The image of the Iwo Jima flag raising perfectly captures the Navy and Marine Corps team. It portrays in a photograph the one thing every corpsman who has served with the Marines knows, you have to go through everything with the Marines you serve with, from training in the field to clearing buildings in a combat zone. If you show them you will be there when they need you, they will trust you with their lives. It is that trust that you cherish as a corpsman. To know that a platoon of Marines looks to you to make sure they come home safe, is on one hand, a great burden, but on the other hand, a great reward.

Joe Rosenthal, an Associated Press photographer, took the Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of five Marines and one Navy corpsman raising the second flag, while Sgt. Bill Genaust, a Marine Corps war photographer, shot video next to him.

According to petty officer Bradley's son, James Bradley, in his book, *Flags of our Fathers*, the second flag was raised after Chandler Johnson,

2nd Battalion commander, found out that Forrestal wanted the first flag as a souvenir. In Johnson's mind, the flag belonged to the men of 2nd Battalion, so he ordered the second flag raised.

After Rosenthal sent his film to be processed, the image was quickly wired out to be published and became to be regarded in the United States as one of the most significant and recognizable images of the war and possibly the most reproduced photograph of all time.

Rosenthal's photo was used for raising money during the 7th War Bond Drive, and has been recreated on everything from postage stamps to commemorative coins. It was even used as a comparison to photos of firefighters raising a flag at the aftermath of the collapse of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

On that day in 1945, six men raised a replacement flag on top of a little mountain in the Pacific and Joe Rosenthal took a picture that would not only inspire millions, but capture what it means to be a part of the Navy/ Marine Corps team!

It has become such an iconic image that as we celebrate all that February has to offer us and we give heart shaped boxes of chocolate to loved ones, we should take a moment to reflect on our Marine Corps history and those who have given so much for us to be where we are today.

BRIEFS

CG's Welcome Aboard

MCRD San Diego's next Commanding General's Welcome Aboard is scheduled for Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., at Marine & Family Services, Bldg. 14. The Welcome Aboard is an information-based orientation offering an overview of programs and services. A bus tour following the brief will include stops at key points of interest aboard the depot. The tour ends at the Recreation Center, Bldg 590, where attendees will receive a free luncheon and an Information Expo.

Newly-arriving service members, their spouses, dependents, retirees, civil service/DoD, and NAF employees are invited to attend. Per Depot Order, the Welcome Aboard is a mandatory attendance function for all newly arriving Marines.

Childcare is available. To obtain Welcome Aboard childcare arrangement information, call (619) 524-0916. For additional information, call (619) 524-5298.

Self-defense class for women

A self-defense class for women will be held Feb. 20 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Bldg. 5E classroom, second floor. Instruction includes the myths and facts of sexual assault, personal safety, assertive techniques, and personal defense. Free child care will be offered to children age 2 and older. To register, call (619) 524-1200.

EFMP Activity & Resource Expo

The Exceptional Family Member Program at MCRD San Diego and Lincoln Military Housing will host families enrolled in their service EFM Program to the 3rd Annual EFMP Activity & Resource Expo Feb. 27 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the depot fieldhouse. The event includes over 40 agencies providing information and resources; interactive demonstrations for the children; presentations by legal, medical and Social Security experts; a Fun Zone; and lunch. For lunch reservations call (619) 524-8086/6078 or email Jennifer Reid at jreid@lps.com.

Military Saves Financial Seminar

A Military Saves Financial Seminar will be offered to all eligible patrons March 2, from 8 to 11 a.m. at the depot theater. Learn how to build wealth, develop a personal financial plan, establish good credit and take charge of your financial future. For information, call (619) 524-5728.

Men's varsity baseball team

The MCRD Warriors, the depot men's varsity baseball team, is looking for active duty Marines, sailors and Coastguardsmen to join the team. Tryouts will be March 1-3 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the main softball field. For information, call Capt. Seth Chambers at (619) 524-4665.

CG's Cup Bowling Tournament

Register for the CG's Cup Bowling (Scratch) tournament Feb. 16, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Health Promotions Training Room located in the Fitness Center. This one-day individual's event will be hosted at the MCRD Recreation Center on 24 February. This event is open to MCRD active duty, and DoD/NAFI employees aboard the depot. For information, call (619) 524-0548.

Send briefs to:

MCRDSDPAO@usmc.mil. The Chevron staff reserves the right to publish only those briefs that comply with Department of Defense regulations and the standards of the U.S. Government.

Become your best self in 2010

BY LT. CMDR. RONALD R. RINGO
H&S Battalion chaplain

Have you ever wondered what things will really matter or be of consequence when this life has finally come to an end? Will the outwardly visible things we've done tip the scales in our favor, or will it be the thoughts and intentions of our hearts? Or will it be some combination of these? When it's all said and done and we look back upon it all what will really matter to us and to God?

Think about the worldly standards of success we have all around us. Consider the man who rises through the ranks to be CEO of a major corporation, or his friend who worked hard to become an all-star quarterback or high-ranking military officer. How about the woman who has devoted her life to raising a good family, or her sister who has become an outstanding cardiologist or senator? When we watch the Olympic games this coming month, we are inspired by the persistent hard work and determination of these athletes, who set new world's records, and wish we could be in their shoes as they win those gold medals. Yet the time inevitably comes when the games are over, the spectators go home and new Olympic hopefuls train to take their places in the near future. Similarly, the CEOs, quarterbacks, military officers, doctors and senators will retire and others will take their place; even moms will find their nests finally empty, in spite of wondering if such a day would ever come! Then what?

I read a quote once by a former state Supreme Court justice, Dallin H. Oaks, who stated, "The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts – what we have done. It is an acknowledgement of the final effect of our acts and thoughts – what we have become. The commandments are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account." He went on to say that he believes the point of it all is to become what God desires us to become.

While we may admire and envy the Olympians and others who achieve such extraordinary successes, the fact is that most of us are not going to be on the cover of any magazine. It is seldom that those who go about quietly serving and blessing others, or who faithfully do their job day after day, or persevere in a difficult marriage, are seen on the evening news or are heralded for their efforts. But, what of their accomplishments? Will they all be forgotten, or are they seen and remembered by someone who will one day stand before us when we account for our lives here? If Justice Oaks is right, that God will be more interested in what we've become, then the question is, "What does God desire you to become?" Something or someone you have no interest in being? I don't think so.

An elderly member of a family, who has shunned organized religion throughout his life, mentioned a dream

he had some years ago. He said, "In my dream, I was sitting in a church with all of you, and I was wearing the most god-awful, itchy suit imaginable. All I could think of was being able to go home and get out of that itchy suit!" It made him itch all over just to remember that vivid dream as he retold it to us. Yet, the dream candidly expressed his fears where God is concerned. I think too many people similarly assume that God desires for them to live out their lives in some itchy suit that they don't want to be wearing in the first place. However, I have found God to be a loving father, who recognizes and respects the intrinsic differences in each of His children, and loves those differences. I don't think he is looking for mass conformity. I think He desires for us to be the happy, healthy, joyful people we are capable of being. I doubt we could picture or desire anything better for ourselves, than He already has in mind.

I don't know about you, but I would not want the flowers in my garden to all be the same, or look the same. Some are more fragile than others and require special care; some are harder and can make it through a cold winter, untended. That's okay. Each one is a work of art. Each one is exquisite and unique in its own way, much like our children. It's hard to imagine that God could possibly have less love or desires for us, than we have for our own children.

Probably the biggest desire I have for my children on any given day is for them to be kind to anyone and everyone who comes in contact with them. You may have heard the saying, "It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice." If any of my kids became famous, I'd be proud of them, but less so if they weren't also good to other people. I have a strong hunch God feels the same.

As I have people come to me for counseling, with their hearts broken over things said and done to them, I feel badly that they have been denied the basic kindness, consideration and compassion they deserve. Such experiences often cause them to doubt their own value or worth as a person. For any of you who may feel the same, I hope you will remember that you were God's child first, before you were anyone's wife, husband, parent or child. That is your first identity, your ongoing identity, and the one that will still be left standing when this life is all done. If you must walk away from any situation, you don't walk away as a "no one." You walk away as a beloved child of God. Although we cannot control the way others may treat us, we still can control how we treat others and how we choose to live.

I feel we all want a life that really matters, one that is full of purpose and hope. If this is what we concentrate our thoughts and actions upon, this is what we will achieve. We have all known or heard of people whose love and goodness continued to be remembered long after they died, living on in the hearts and memories of people for generations. Each of us has the power to be such a person. Go and become your best self.