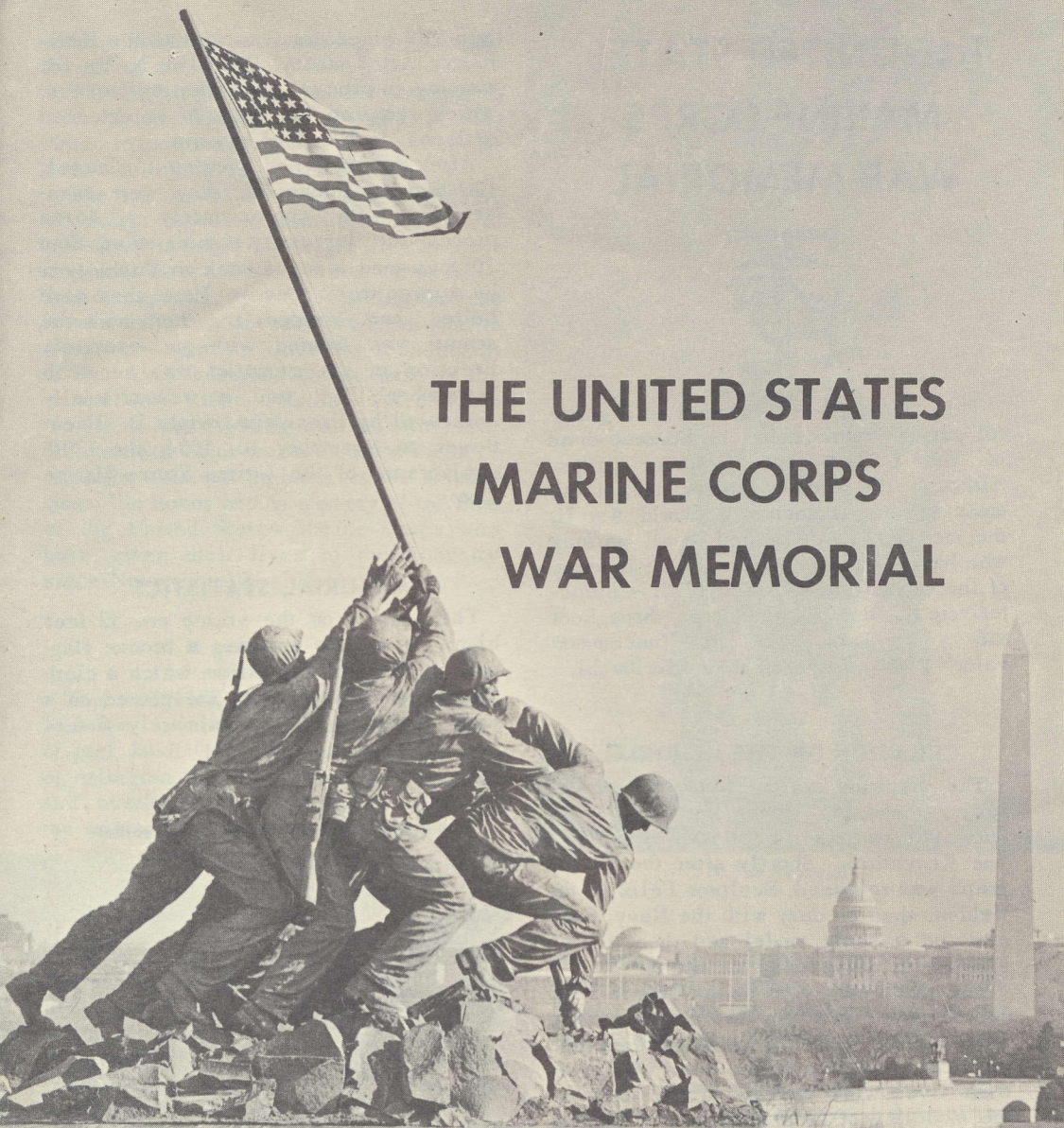


THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WAR MEMORIAL



PHILIPPO JIMA IJINAWA KOREA 1950

REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775-1783 FRENCH NAVAL WAR 1798-1801 TRIPOLI 1801-1805 WAR OF 1812-1815 FLORIDA INDIAN WARS 1835-1842



THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WAR MEMORIAL



This memorial is a symbol of a grateful nation's esteem for the honored dead of the United States Marine Corps. Although the statue depicts one of the most famous incidents of World War II, the memorial is dedicated to all Marines who have given their lives in the defense of the United States since 1775. Characteristic of the Marine Corps throughout the years has been its "uncommon valor" as exhibited on Mount Suribachi.

CREATION OF THE MEMORIAL

The inspiring action photograph of the Marines raising the flag on Mount Suribachi was taken by newsphotographer Joe Rosenthal. Shortly after the photograph was released, Sculptor Felix W. de Weldon, then on duty with the Navy, constructed a scale model and then a life-size model inspired by the scene.

The three survivors of the flag raising posed for the sculptor who modeled their faces in clay. All available pictures and physical statistics of the three who gave their lives were assembled and used in the modeling of their faces. The figures were originally molded in the nude so that the strain of muscles would be shown after clothing was molded on the struggling figures.

Steel framework, roughly duplicating the bone structure of the human body, was assembled to support the huge figures under construction.

Once the statue was completed in plaster, it was carefully disassembled

into 108 pieces and trucked to the Bedi-Rassy Art Foundry, Brooklyn, N. Y., for casting in bronze. The casting process, which required the work of experienced artisans, took nearly 3 years.

After the parts had been cast, cleaned, finished, and chased, they were reassembled into approximately a dozen pieces—the largest weighing more than 20 tons—and brought back to Washington by a three-truck convoy. Here, they were bolted and welded together and the statue was treated with preservatives. Erection of the memorial was begun in September 1954, and it was officially dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on November 10, 1954, the 179th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps.

MEMORIAL STATISTICS

The figures on the statue are 32 feet high. They are erecting a bronze flagpole 60 feet in length from which a cloth flag flies. The figures are placed on a rock slope rising approximately 6 feet

● Original photograph by Joe Rosenthal



from a 10-foot base making the overall height of the statue 78 feet.

The M-1 rifle and carbine carried by two of the figures are 16 and 12 feet long, respectively. The canteen, if filled, would hold 32 quarts of water.

The figures of the statue are standing on rough Swedish granite. Blocks of polished Swedish black granite cover the concrete base of the statue. Burnished into the granite, in gold lettering, are the names and dates of every principal Marine Corps engagement since its founding in 1775. Also inscribed on the base is the tribute of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to the fighting men on Iwo Jima: "Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue." Opposite this, on the base, is the inscription: "In honor and in memory of the men of the United States Marine Corps who have given their lives to their country since November 10, 1775."

THE SITE

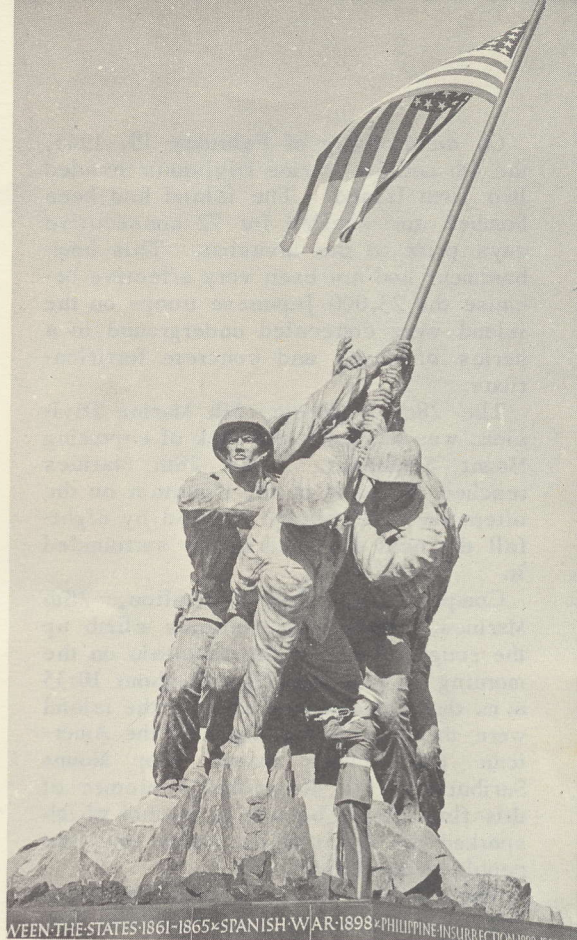
The memorial, designed by Horace W. Peaslee, is situated on a 7½-acre tract of park land. It borders the northern end of Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, and overlooks Washington, D. C., near the western end of Memorial Bridge.

THE COST

The entire cost of the statue and developing the memorial site was \$850,000, all donated by U. S. Marines, former Marines, Marine Corps Reservists, friends of the Marine Corps, and members of the Naval Service. No public funds were used for this memorial.

HISTORY OF THE FLAG RAISING

The small island of Iwo Jima lies 660 miles south of Tokyo. It has as one of



● The Memorial

its outstanding geographical features, an extinct volcano, Mount Suribachi, which forms the narrow southern tip of the island and rises 550 feet to dominate the entire area.

By February 1945, the United States Armed Forces had recaptured most of the territory taken by the Japanese in 1941 and 1942. Iwo Jima, because of its strategic position, was selected as a primary objective in the American plan to bring the Pacific Campaign to a successful conclusion.

The National Park System, of which the National Capital Parks are a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

On the morning of February 19, 1945, the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions invaded Iwo Jima Island. The island had been bombed and shelled for 72 consecutive days prior to the invasion. This bombardment had not been very effective because the 23,000 Japanese troops on the island were concealed underground in a series of caves and concrete fortifications.

The 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division, was assigned the task of capturing Mount Suribachi. The 28th Marines reached the base of the mountain on the afternoon of February 21, and by nightfall the next day, had nearly surrounded it.

Company E, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, started the tortuous climb up the rough terrain of the mountain on the morning of February 23. At about 10:35 a. m. that day, Marines all over the island were thrilled by the sight of the American Flag being raised atop Mount Suribachi. Mr. Rosenthal's picture of this flag-raising became a symbol which sparked the spirit of our nation and free people everywhere.

The six men who raised the flag were: Pfc. Ira H. Hayes, the figure farthest from the flag staff; Pfc. Franklyn R. Sousley, the figure to the right front of Hayes; Sgt. Michael Strank, on Sousley's left; PhM 2/C John H. Bradley, USN, in front of Sousley; Pfc. Rene A. Gagnon, in front of Strank; and Cpl. Harlan H. Block, the figure at the bottom of the flag staff.

Sergeant Strank, Corporal Block, and Private 1st Class Sousley were killed in later phases of the Iwo Jima battle.

This battle cost the lives of 5,563 Marines and 17,343 others suffered wounds. The island served subsequently, during World War II, as an important American Air Base for refueling and emergency repairs to B-29 Superfortresses.

ADMINISTRATION

The United States Marine Corps War Memorial is a part of the National Capital Parks, which are administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. All inquiries should be addressed to Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, Interior Building, Washington 25, D.C.

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