

United States Marine Corps War Memorial

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



George Washington
Memorial Parkway
District of Columbia/Maryland/Virginia



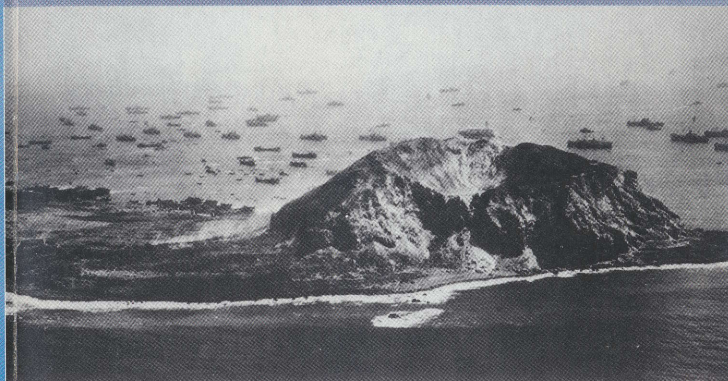
"UNCOMMON VALOR WAS A COMMON VIRTUE"



NPS/TERRY ADAMS

REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775-1783 • FRENCH NAVAL WAR 1798-1801 • TRIPOLI 1801-1805 • WAR OF 1812-1815 • FLORIDA

SPANISH WAR 1898 • PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION 1898-1902 • BOXER REBELLION 1900 • NICARAGUA 1912 • VERA CRUZ 1914 • H



U.S. MARINE CORPS

Mount Suribachi dominates the landing beaches where the battle for Iwo Jima began.

A Memorial to Courage and Freedom

A fraction of a second . . . one click of a camera . . . and a powerful image is captured that engrosses a war-weary nation and fuels its resolve to push for final victory. This memorial, inspired by and based upon that image, is a testament to the bravery, honor, and sacrifice of the United States Marine Corps in its long and celebrated history.

The origins of the memorial lay on the small volcanic island of Iwo Jima, 660 nautical miles south of Tokyo. Iwo Jima's location, midway between the Japanese home islands and American bomber bases in the Mariana Islands, was key to each country's strategy in the final year of World War II.

By February 1945 the Japanese had constructed airfields on Iwo Jima. The airfields were used to launch attacks against U.S. bases in the Marianas and American long-range B-29 bombers. If the airfields were in American hands, U.S. fighter planes could escort bombing missions against Japan, and damaged bombers could use the island as a sanctuary.

The Japanese troops on Iwo Jima, commanded by Lt. Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi, had prepared a formidable series of defenses to protect the island. They vowed to defend it to their death. The Marines had the ability to take the island, but at what cost?

The battle for Iwo Jima lasted 36 days—from February 19 to March 26, 1945. Over 70,000 American troops, mostly Marines, under the command of Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, engaged over 21,000 Japanese defenders in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Almost 7,000 Marines, sailors, and soldiers were killed or missing during the battle and almost 20,000 were wounded. Only 1,100 Japanese soldiers survived.

Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz called the capture of Iwo Jima "as necessary to us in our continuing forward movement toward final victory as it was vital to the enemy in staving off ultimate defeat."



U.S. MARINE CORPS

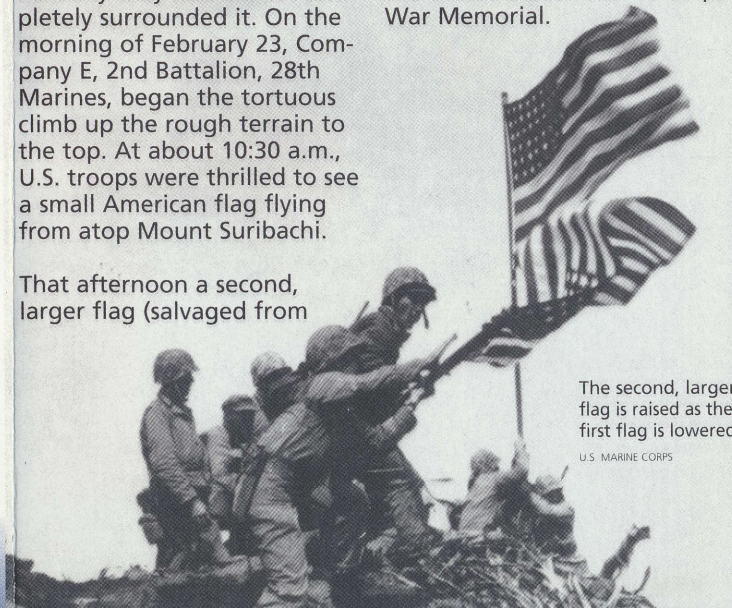
Marines dig in near Mount Suribachi as enemy fire sweeps the beach.

The Flag Raisings

Once ashore on February 19, 1945, the 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division, began its assault on Mount Suribachi, an extinct volcano that rises 550 feet to dominate the southern tip of the fan-shaped island. The Marines reached the base of the mountain on the afternoon of February 21; by nightfall the next day they had almost completely surrounded it. On the morning of February 23, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, began the tortuous climb up the rough terrain to the top. At about 10:30 a.m., U.S. troops were thrilled to see a small American flag flying from atop Mount Suribachi.

That afternoon a second, larger flag (salvaged from

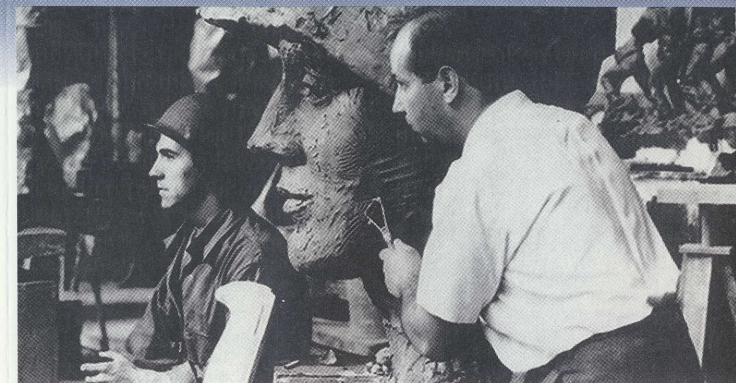
Pearl Harbor) was raised by Marines Michael Strank, Harlon H. Block, Franklin R. Sousley, Rene A. Gagnon, and Ira Hayes, and Navy hospital corpsman John H. Bradley. News photographer Joe Rosenthal caught the afternoon flag raising in an inspiring photograph that won him a Pulitzer Prize and inspired the creation of the United States Marine Corps War Memorial.



The second, larger flag is raised as the first flag is lowered.

U.S. MARINE CORPS

SOISSON • ST. MIHELZ • BLANC MONT • MEUSE-ARGONNE • NICARAGUA 1926-1933 • WORLD WAR II • 1941 PEARL HARBOR • WAKE ISLAND • SHALL ISLANDS • MARIANAS ISLANDS • PELELIU • 1945 IWO JIMA • OKINAWA • KOREA 1950 • LEBANON 1958 • VIETNAM 1962-1975 • DOMINIC



Rene Gagnon poses for sculptor Felix W. de Weldon.

Making the Memorial

Sculptor Felix W. de Weldon, then with the U.S. Navy, found Rosenthal's photograph so inspiring that he immediately began sculpting a small wax model of the scene. He was then asked to construct two nine-foot-tall versions for a war bond drive. De Weldon was subsequently commissioned to sculpt the present 78-foot-high memorial. Gagnon, Hayes, and Bradley, the three survivors of the flag raising (the others had been killed in later phases of the battle for Iwo Jima), posed for the sculptor. De Weldon modeled the others using available pictures and physical descriptions.

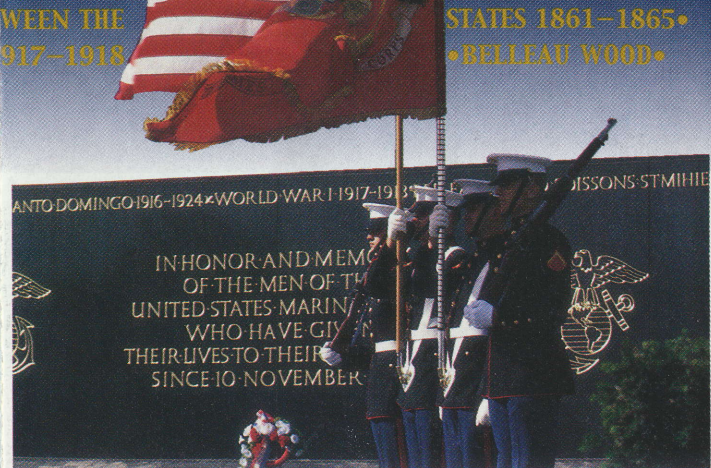
President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the memorial on November 10, 1954, the 179th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps. It stands as a symbol of our nation's gratitude to those Marines and their comrades of other services who have sacrificed their lives for their country. No public funds were used in building the memorial. Marines, Naval Service members, and friends donated the entire cost (\$850,000).

Memorial Statistics

The 32-foot-high figures are depicted raising a 60-foot flagpole from which a flag flies 24 hours a day. They occupy positions similar to those in Rosenthal's historic photograph. As you stand before the memorial (see cover photograph), the four figures in front are, left to right, Hayes, Sousley, Bradley, and Block. The two in back are Strank (behind Sousley) and Gagnon (behind Bradley).

The six figures stand upon a jumble of igneous rock that represents the volcanic debris atop Mount Suribachi. On the memorial's polished base, engraved and burnished in gold, are the names and dates of principal Marine Corps campaigns and battles.

Also inscribed on the base is the tribute of Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz to the fighting men on Iwo Jima: "Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue." And below this is inscribed "Semper Fidelis"—Latin for "always faithful"—the motto of the United States Marine Corps.



Principal Marine engagements are inscribed on the memorial.

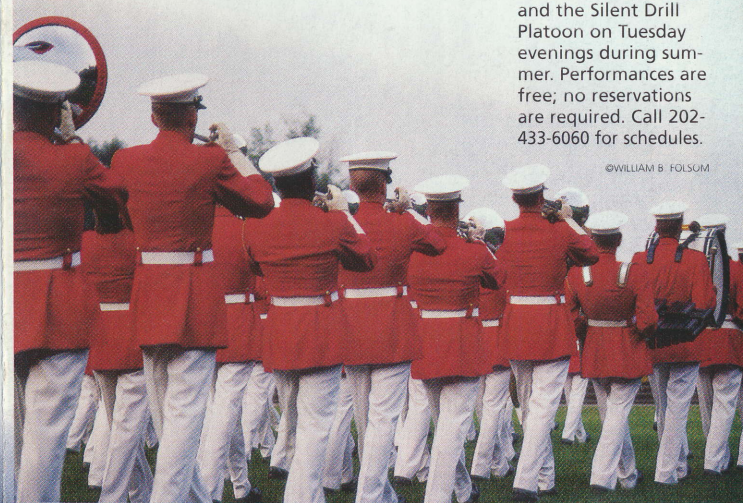
The United States Marine Corps

The United States Marine Corps was established by the Continental Congress in November 1775 to serve as shipboard infantry for the fledgling Continental Navy. Since then it has evolved into a multi-purpose force dedicated to the defense of freedom both in the United States and abroad.

From the first amphibious operations in the Revolutionary War through today's efforts

to promote freedom around the world, the U.S. Marine Corps has enjoyed a reputation as an effective fighting force throughout its over 230-year history. The names of principal campaigns engraved on the memorial are a testament to the sacrifices Marines have made in service to America.

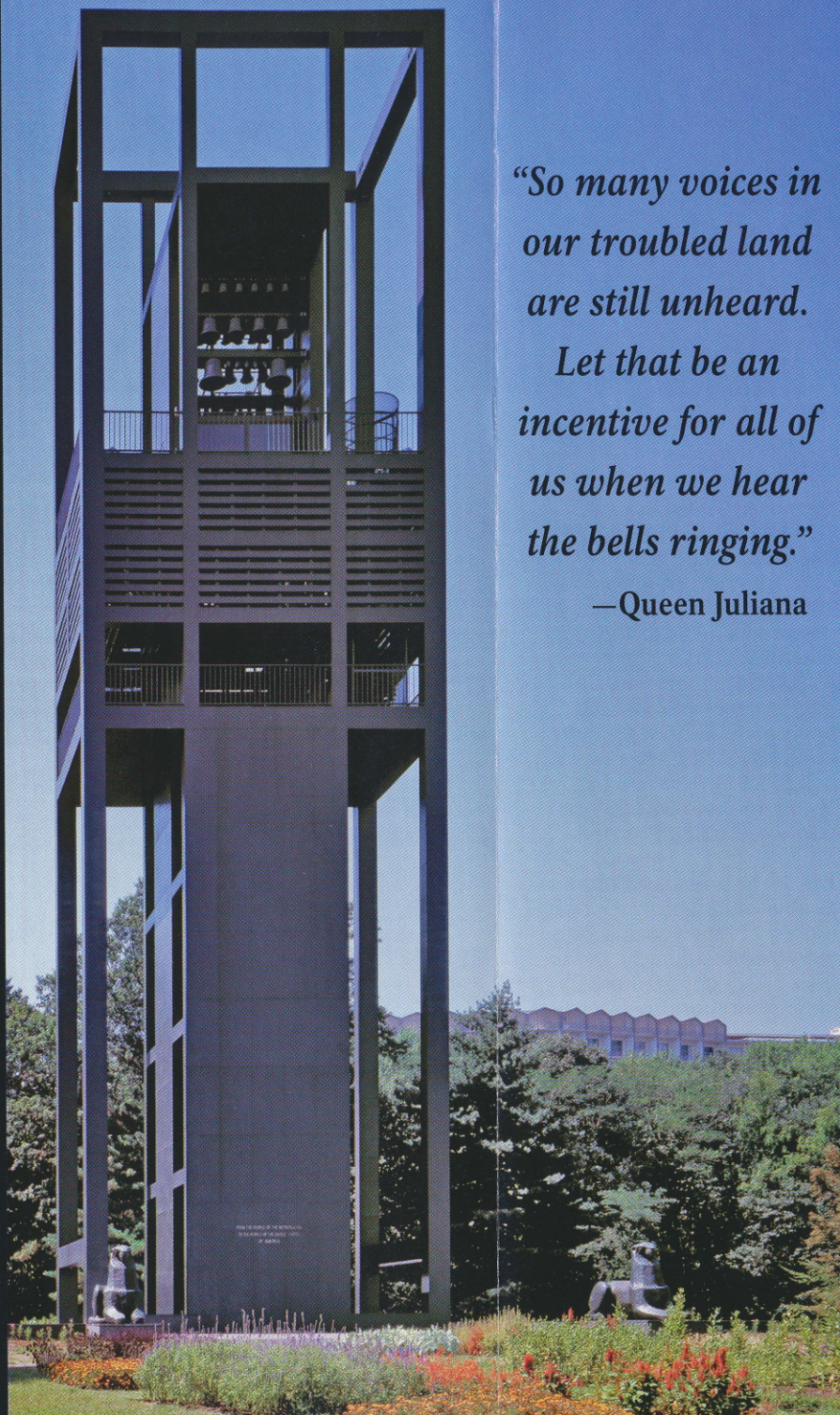
The Marine Corps presents the Sunset Parade featuring the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and the Silent Drill Platoon on Tuesday evenings during summer. Performances are free; no reservations are required. Call 202-433-6060 for schedules.



Netherlands Carillon

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*"So many voices in
our troubled land
are still unheard.*

*Let that be an
incentive for all of
us when we hear
the bells ringing."*

—Queen Juliana



HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

Queen Juliana and President Harry S. Truman during her 1952 visit.

A Gift of Friendship

Near the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial stands a large bell tower, the Netherlands Carillon. This was a gift "From the People of the Netherlands to the People of the United States" in gratitude for American aid during and after World War II. The carillon symbolizes and is dedicated to the friendship between two countries and their common allegiance to the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy.

The idea for this symbolic gift came from a Dutch government official. Endorsed by Queen Juliana, the concept and the drive for funds to build the carillon and tower met with generous response from all sections of the Netherlands. On



NPS

Each bell carries an emblem and verse signifying a group within Dutch society.

April 4, 1952, during a visit to the United States, Queen Juliana presented a small silver bell to President Truman as a token of the carillon to come.

First installed at a nearby site in 1954, the tower and 49-bell carillon were moved to their present location in 1960. Dutch- and American-sponsored renovations were completed in 1995. A 50th bell was dedicated on May 5 of that year, on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazis.

Design and Construction

The 50-bell carillon is cast from a bronze alloy of about four-fifths copper and one-fifth tin. Its total weight is 61,438 pounds. The largest bell, or bourdon, is six feet, nine inches in diameter and weighs 12,654 pounds; the smallest bell, or treble, is eight inches in diameter and weighs 35 pounds. Each bell carries an emblem, as well as a verse by Dutch poet Ben van Eyselsteijn. The smallest bells, for example, contain verses about youth.

COVER ©CAROLE HIGSMITH
PANORAMA ©JOHN SKOWRONSKI





Edward M. Nassor, volunteer carillon director, performs on-site.

The tower housing the carillon, designed by leading Dutch architect Joost W. C. Boks, is an open steel structure reinforced by steel plates. It is approximately 127 feet high, 25 feet deep, and 36 feet wide, and stands on a quartzite plaza 93 feet square. The plaza is enclosed by a low lava stone wall. Two bronze lions designed by Dutch sculptor Paul Koning guard the plaza steps. A rectangular staircase leads to an observatory platform. From there a small circular staircase winds up to the glass-enclosed playing cabin 83 feet above the ground.

Operation of the Carillon

The carillon is tuned to the chromatic scale. Its 50 bells give it two notes more than four octaves. In the playing cabin are the wooden levers and pedals of the clavier. These connect directly to the movable inner clappers of the stationary hanging bells, permitting the carillonneur to achieve a full musical expression. Eighteen bells of the Netherlands Carillon are programmed to play a medley of songs by computer at 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. each day.

About Your Visit

The United States Marine Corps War Memorial and Netherlands Carillon are administered by George Washington Memorial Parkway. They are located in Virginia along the northern edge of Arlington National Cemetery, across from major monuments and memorials in Washington, D.C. Both are accessible via Rosslyn and Arlington Cemetery Metro stops, as well as via U.S. 50 and I-66.

Visitors may attend free concerts by trained carilloners on Saturdays from May through September. In May, September, and on national holidays, concerts are held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. From June through August, concerts are held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Safety Note: Persons with cardiac or respiratory conditions should use caution when climbing the 135 tower steps. Small children must be closely supervised by an adult.

George Washington Memorial Parkway is part of the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.



For More Information
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101
703-289-2500
www.nps.gov/gwmp



Tulips, a national symbol of the Netherlands, bloom each year in a spectacular spring display in front of the carillon. Afterwards, some 5,400 other flowers are planted annually in the beds surrounding the memorial. Please refrain from picking the flowers so others may enjoy them.

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