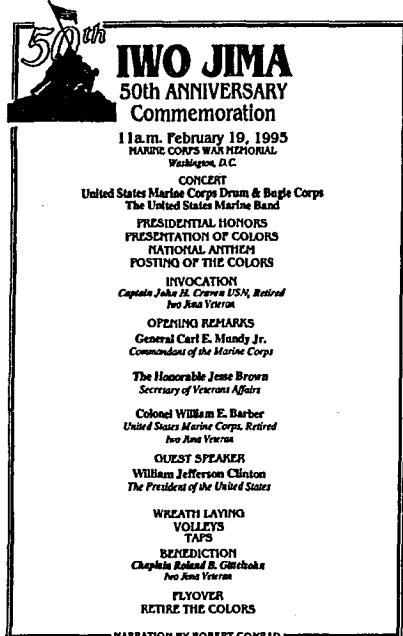


Remembering Iwo Jima: CMC remarks

Mundy, Carl E. Jr

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pg. 18



Invocation

Eternal Father strong to save, you have given us to know high and holy moments, days of great challenge, and hours of extreme danger.

We acknowledge it is by Thy grace we are permitted to gather on this site 50 years from the day we landed on that tiny island whose capture was such a giant step in bringing victory to our forces and the end to World War II.

Today we commemorate all those who died on Iwo Jima. We give thanks for their good examples and brave testimonies—for those who being dead, yet speak—for those whose love is with us forever.

May the same spirit of sacrificial commitment remembered on this 50th anniversary, fill our lives, and keep us "always faithful." Show us our part in the redemption of this world from strife and bloodshed, and make us courageous in the accomplishment of this holy purpose.

To this end we dedicate ourselves to you, the author of true liberty, and to the honor and glory of Thy holy name.

John B. Craven

1945 ☆ Remember

CMC Remarks Iwo Jima Ceremony Marine Corps War Memorial 19 February 1995

Mr. President, veterans and families of the epic battle for Iwo Jima, members of Congress, distinguished officials of governments, and very proud Americans here with us.

Fifty years ago today, assault waves of the 4th and 5th United States Marine Divisions, followed closely by the 3d crossed the line of departure in their amphibian tractors. Leaving their ships behind, they churned toward a sulphurous, waterless, smoke-covered, volcanic island called Iwo Jima, a Pacific fortress held by 20,000 heavily fortified defenders.

By this hour, on that day, eight battalions of Marines were ashore, dragging their equipment up the loose, black sand of the beach. Before the day would end 2,400 of them would be killed or wounded. The 36-day battle that followed was an epic in tenacity and human courage. The exploits of not only the Marines, but equally of the Sailors and Soldiers of the V Amphibious Corps who seized Iwo Jima have passed into national legend.

This magnificent statue behind me freezes in enduring bronze that splits-second in time when our flag went up over the volcano called Suribachi. In so doing, it captures the spirit of every American who came ashore, struggled up the volcanic beach, and into the month-long firestorm that was Iwo Jima. Even more than that, while this is the Marine War Memorial, it is also a visual national symbol not just of Marines, but indeed, of all who have gone forth to battle for our Nation in its wars.

Our victory at Iwo Jima was the result of thousands of individual actions. Of the 81 Medals of Honor awarded to Marines in World War II, more than a quarter—22—were earned at Iwo Jima.

Half were posthumous. There were also five Medals of Honor given to Navy men. Two of those were posthumous. Eighteen of the 27 infantry battalion commanders fell while leading their Marines. Indeed, there are many heroes of that battle—some buried close to where we today stand. But, they, and those of you here today, have left a legacy. Your actions on that small, desolate island will never be forgotten. This memorial and its flag stand as a reminder to a grateful Nation of what you gave, and what you accomplished, a half-century ago.

While individual memories may fade, the memory of our Nation will never forget that at a place called Iwo Jima, in the vast expanses of the Western Pacific, you became part of something that will live forever. Your exploits have passed into that page of history where the great, war-deciding battles are listed—the battles that decide the fates of nations—and your exploits will live as long as this great Republic lives. This is your day. You have paid for it with blood, and sweat, and tears, and the long absence of friends. Many fallen comrades are not with us here today in person, but they will be with us forever in spirit. As the poet has written:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

We who are the Marines, the Sailors, the Soldiers, the Airmen, and the Coast Guardsmen of today, we remember, and we are privileged and proud to follow in your footsteps where the brightness of your achievement lights our way. . . .