



The Bugle Call



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September 2019, Volume 9, Num 7

Warminster, Pennsylvania

Ann's Choice Residents and Guests are invited to attend Veterans Group Programs and Events- (Meetings are open to ALL with no charge)

NEXT MEETING:

**September 17, 2019 at 7:30 pm,
Ann's Choice PAC**

The Johnsville Naval Air Development Center (NADC) has a rich history of advanced research and development. One was the human centrifuge used to research the limits of human tolerance for "G" forces. Construction of the human centrifuge building began in 1947 and was completed by 1949. By the late 1950s astronauts for the US Space Program began training at Johnsville, and continued until 2004.



The goal of Johnsville Centrifuge and Science Museum is to restore and exhibit the training capsule used for the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs and other artifacts from the NADC. Michael Maguire and Mark Calhoun from the museum will give us an update on the museum.

All members are encouraged to wear their Veterans Group shirts to the meeting.

Share Your Story

Did you serve during World War II or the Korean War? Do you have any letters you wrote to family back home which describe what you were doing during the war? Would you be able to spend fifteen to thirty minutes talking about your recollections of those times?

If you answered 'yes' to any of those questions, please contact the newsletter editor, John Hodges, at (215) 323-4969 or at BC-412.

New Members

A big welcome to David Paddock (1964 - 1967, US Marines, Vietnam) who recently joined the Ann's Choice Veterans Group.

Veterans Group Meeting on Tuesday, October 15

The Veterans Group will meet in the Ann's Choice PAC on Tuesday evening, October 15, at 7:30 pm.

A representative from the Bucks County Dept. Of Military Affairs will update us on the programs and assistance the office can provide to veterans.

Program Committee Volunteers

The Veterans Group Board is seeking a few volunteers to help plan the monthly programs during the year. We have a program at each Veterans Group meeting in January through April, June, September and October. We have resources and contacts from previous meetings which can be used again for future meetings. And new ideas for program topics are always welcome. Contact Gordon Larson (215-672-3137) or Mary Hurly (215-420-7472).

Volunteer and Service Opportunities

There is a continuing need for help with the program to drive veterans to the Horsham VA Center. Volunteers do not have to be veterans themselves in order to assist veterans getting to their appointments. Call Judy Wright at 215-674-2328 for information about the program or to schedule a ride.



Volunteers are also needed to help with the Deployable Flags Program to line our streets with flags. For more information or to volunteer call Jerry

Wright at 215-674-2328.

Volunteers are also needed at meetings to help residents with mobility devices. For more information or to volunteer for this service call Russ Neiger at 610-930-3077.

Jack Edgar Aboard the *USS Queens*

Ann's Choice resident Jack Edgar grew up in North Catasauqua with his parents and older brother. His father owned a local drug store selling tobacco, patent medicines, candy and treats from the soda fountain. Jack graduated from Whitehall High School in 1940 and went to West Chester University in the class of 1944, majoring in music.

After Pearl Harbor, Jack enlisted in the Navy and in late 1943 was sent to Muhlenberg Univ. for V-12 training. The V-12 Navy College Training Program was designed to supplement the force of commissioned officers during World War II. Then he was sent to Plattsburg with about 4,000 other young men for midshipman training. By the middle of 1943, all of them were ensigns.



USS Queens (APA-103) at anchor, ca. 1945

The *USS Queens* (APA-103) was one of thousands of ships built in less than 10 months, served honorably in the Atlantic or Pacific theaters, and was decommissioned soon after the war ended. The *USS Queens* was a Windsor-class attack

transport. They transported troops and their equipment to foreign shores for amphibious invasions using an array of smaller assault boats integral to the attack transport itself. The class was well armed with anti-aircraft weaponry to protect itself and its cargo of troops from air attack in the battle zone.

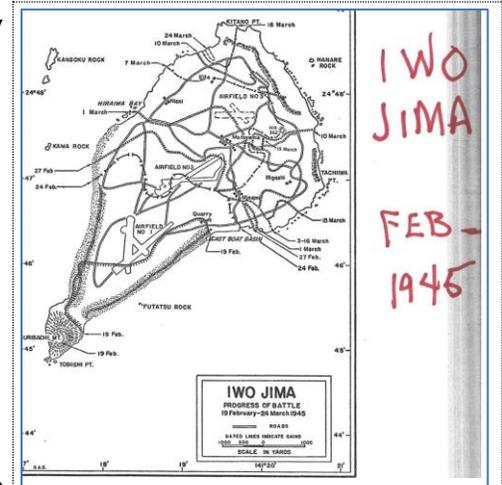
Ships of the Windsor class served exclusively in the Pacific Theatre. After V-J Day, the Windsors, like virtually all classes of attack transport, transported fresh troops to occupation missions in Japan and its former occupied territories such as China and Korea, and later to Operation Magic Carpet, the giant sealift organized to bring millions of demobilizing servicemen back to the US.

..The hull for the *Queens* was laid on March 2, 1944 at Bethlehem Steel, Sparrows Point, MD. She was launched on September 12, 1944 and delivered to the Navy on December 16.

In 1944, Jack Edgar was assigned to the new *Queens* and boarded her at Sparrows Point. Shakedown cruises were in the Chesapeake Bay and Norfolk. She was assigned to Task Force 29 and ordered to the Pacific theater via the Panama Canal. She took six to eight hours to transit the Panama Canal, as Jack Edgar recalled. He commanded one of the 36-foot LCVP's for the transit. The "Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel" (LCVP) or Higgins boat was

a landing craft used extensively in amphibious landings in World War II. The craft was designed by Andrew Higgins. Four of them were carried on davits on the side of the ship. These were lowered and manned for the transit through the canal. Jack recalls that a cold lunch was lowered from the fantail of the *Queens*. She arrived at Pearl Harbor on February 7 and conducted additional amphibious training.

On March 2, 1945, *Queens* departed Pearl Harbor, carrying 1,250 Army and Navy troops bound for Iwo Jima. The *Queens* debarked troops at Iwo Jima on March 26, missing the invasion and fighting to take Iwo Jima. Jack Edgar remembers that the *Queens* had cargo



Map of Iwo Jima from Jack Edgar.

including beer and candy bars for canteens after the anticipated successful invasion. She also transported P-51 Mustang pilots for fighters which were to be based at one of the airfields. Departing Iwo Jima on April 12 with 1,500 Marines, she proceeded via Guam, Eniwetok and Pearl Harbor to Hilo, Hawaii, where she debarked troops April 25.

Background on Iwo Jima

The Volcano Islands, or Iwo Islands, are a group of three islands south of Japan – Kita Iwo Jima (North Sulphur Island), Iwo Jima (Sulphur Island), and Minami Iwo Island (South Sulphur Island).

Japanese preparations

After the American capture of the Marshall Islands, and the devastating air attacks against the Japanese on Truk Atoll in the Carolines in January 1944, the Japanese military leaders reevaluated their situation. All indications pointed to an American drive toward the Mariana Islands and the Carolines. To counter this, the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) and the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) established an inner line of defenses extending generally northward from the Carolines to the Marianas, and thence to Japan via the Volcano Islands, and westward from the Marianas via the Carolines and the Palau Islands to the Philippines.

After the U.S. seized bases in the Marshall Islands in February 1944, Japanese Army and Navy reinforcements reached more than 5,000 men. The loss of the

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Marianas in 1944 greatly increased the importance of the Volcano Islands for the Japanese; the loss would facilitate air raids against the Home Islands, disrupting war manufacturing and severely damaging civilian morale.

By June 1944, Lt. Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi, assigned to

command the defense of Iwo Jima, knew that Japan could not win the battle, but he hoped to inflict massive casualties on the American forces, so that the United States and its allies would reconsider carrying out the invasion of Japanese Home Islands.

Kuribayashi designed a defense utilizing an extensive system of tunnels that connected prepared positions and deep bunkers with supplies. Preparations were hampered by severe losses in previous battles, shortages of supplies and trained men, and the need to defend Taiwan and the Japanese Home Islands. He also received a handful of kamikaze pilots to use against the enemy fleet. Three hundred and eighteen American sailors were killed by kamikaze attacks during the battle.

American preparations

Starting on June 15, 1944, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army Air Forces began naval bombardments and air raids against Iwo Jima, which would become the longest and most intense in the Pacific theater. Faulty, imperfect intelligence led to this statement –

"Well, this will be easy. The Japanese will surrender Iwo Jima without a fight."

– Chester W. Nimitz

Pre-landing bombardment

Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, commander of the Marine landing force, requested first a 10-day heavy shelling of the island immediately preceding the amphibious assault; when it was not approved he requested a 9-day shelling. Only a three-day schedule was approved by Rear Adm. William H. P. Blandy, commander of the Amphibious Support Force (Task Force 52). After the war, Lieut. Gen. Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith, commander Expeditionary Troops (Task Force 56), bitterly

complained that the lack of naval gunfire had cost Marine lives during the entire Allied island campaign.

Poor weather hampered the shelling and only about 13 hours' worth occurred during the 34 hours of available daylight.

Invasion and Victory

The **Battle of Iwo Jima** (February 19 – March 26, 1945) was a major battle in which the United States Marine Corps and Navy landed on and eventually captured the island of Iwo Jima from the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA). The goal of the invasion was capturing the entire island, with three Japanese-controlled airfields (including the South Field and the Central Field), to provide a staging area for attacks on the Japanese main islands. This five-week battle comprised some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of the Pacific War of World War II.

By the time of the landing, about 450 American ships were located off Iwo Jima. The entire battle involved about 60,000 U.S. Marines and several thousand U.S. Navy Seabees. The American ground forces were supported by extensive naval artillery, and had complete air supremacy provided by U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aviators throughout the entire battle.

After the heavy losses incurred in the battle, the strategic value of the island became controversial. It was useless to the U.S. Army as a staging base and useless to the U.S. Navy as a fleet base. However, Navy Seabees rebuilt the landing strips originally built by the Japanese, and they were used as emergency landing strips for USAAF B-29s.

Despite the bloody fighting and severe casualties on both sides, the American victory was assured from the start. Overwhelming American superiority in numbers and arms and complete air supremacy – coupled with the impossibility of Japanese retreat or reinforcement, along with sparse food and supplies – permitted no plausible circumstance in which the Americans could have lost the battle.

Though ultimately victorious, the American victory at Iwo Jima had come at a terrible price. According to the official Navy Department Library website, "The 36-day (Iwo Jima) assault resulted in more than 26,000 American casualties, including 6,800 dead. Japanese combat deaths numbered three times the number of American deaths although, uniquely among Pacific War Marine battles, American total casualties (dead and wounded) exceeded those of the Japanese. Of the 21,000 Japanese soldiers on Iwo Jima at the beginning of the battle, only 216 were taken prisoner, some of whom were captured because they had been knocked unconscious or otherwise disabled. The majority of the

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remainder were killed in action, although it has been estimated that as many as 3,000 continued to resist within the various cave systems for many days afterwards, eventually succumbing to their injuries or surrendering weeks later.

Recollections of Jack Edgar

Jack Edgar, on board the *USS Queens*, arrived after the invasion of Iwo Jima. The *Queens* arrived on the east side of the island and looked up at Mt. Suribachi. On the west side of the island Jack delivered a couple of soldiers in his LCVP; he also went ashore, picked up some stones and wrote “IWO” on them as souvenirs. Later back at Pearl the *Queens* was combat loaded for the invasion of Japan when the atomic bomb was dropped. When Jack was landing soldiers at Japan for the occupation, one of them commented “Oh My G--, we would have been slaughtered”. The Japanese were really dug in.

Aftermath of Iwo Jima

In hindsight, given the number of casualties, the necessity and long-term significance of the island's



This memorial commemorated the reunion of American and Japanese veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima on the Iwo Jima island.

capture to the outcome of the war became a contentious issue and remains disputed. The Marines, who suffered the actual casualties, were not consulted in the planning of the operation. As early as April 1945, retired Chief of Naval Operations W. V. Pratt stated in *Newsweek* magazine that considering the "expenditure of man-

power to acquire a small, God-forsaken island, useless to the Army as a staging base and useless to the Navy as a fleet base ... [one] wonders if

the same sort of airbase could not have been reached by acquiring other strategic localities at lower cost."

The lessons learned on Iwo Jima served as guidelines for the following Battle of Okinawa and the planned invasion of the Japanese homeland. The justification for Iwo Jima's strategic importance to the United States' war effort has been that it provided a landing and refueling site for long-

range fighter escorts. These escorts proved impractical and unnecessary.

The Japanese on Iwo Jima had radar and were thus able to notify their comrades at home of incoming B-29 Superfortresses flying from the Mariana Islands. However, the Japanese also received early warnings from the island of Rota (which was never invaded).

Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor was awarded to 27 U.S. Marines and U.S. sailors (14 posthumously). 22 medals were presented to Marines (12 posthumously) and 5 to sailors, 4 of whom were hospital corpsmen (2 posthumously) attached to Marine infantry units; 22 Medals of Honor were 28% of the 82 awarded to Marines in World War II.

Legacy

"Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" is a black and white photograph taken by Joe Rosenthal depicting six Marines from E Company, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, raising a U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi on February 23, 1945. The photograph was extremely popular, reprinted in thousands of publications, and ultimately came to be regarded as one of the most significant and recognizable images of the war. It was used by Felix de Weldon to sculpt the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial), located adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. The Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial) was dedicated on 10 November 1954.

On 19 February 1985, the 40th anniversary of the landings on Iwo Jima, an event called the "Reunion of Honor" was held (the event has been held annually since 2002). Veterans of both sides attended the event held on the invasion beach where U.S. forces landed. A memorial with inscriptions engraved by both sides was built at the center of the meeting place. Japanese attended at the mountain side, where the Japanese inscription was carved, and Americans attended at the shore side, where the English inscription was carved. After unveiling and an offering, representatives of both countries approached the memorial; upon meeting, they shook hands. The combined Japan-U.S. memorial service of the 50th anniversary of the battle was held in front of the monument in February 1995.

The importance of the battle to Marines today is demonstrated in pilgrimages made to the island, and specifically the summit of Suribachi. Marines will often leave dog tags, rank insignia, or other tokens at the monuments in homage.

The Japanese government continues to search for and retrieve the remains of Japanese military personnel who were killed during the battle.

Based on various Wikipedia articles and information on related websites, plus discussions with Jack Edgar.