

SPECIAL REPORT ★ 75TH ANNIVERSARY

# IWO JIMA THE MEMORIAL

## FLAG RAISERS

Here are the Marines who are now credited with the flag raising in AP photographer Joe Rosenthal's image (right) from the Battle of Iwo Jima:

### HARLON BLOCK



Born: Yorktown, Texas  
Buried: Harlingen, Texas

- Harlon Block was mortally wounded on March 1, 1945, shortly after taking command of a squadron on Iwo Jima. His reported last words were, "They killed me."

### IRA HAYES



Born: Sacaton, Arizona  
Buried: Arlington National Cemetery

- In retrospect, Ira Hayes was the only actual flag raiser who participated in the Seventh War Loan Drive that raised \$26 billion. Two other men on the tour – John Bradley and René Gagnon – had been misidentified, which was not officially realized until the 2010s.

### HAROLD KELLER



Born: Brooklyn, Iowa  
Buried: Brooklyn, Iowa

- Harold Keller was not definitively identified as a flag raiser until 2019. He told few – if any people – he was a flag raiser. "I think he just didn't want any claim to fame," said his daughter Kay (Keller) Maurer.

### HAROLD SCHULTZ



Born: Detroit, Michigan  
Buried: Hollywood, California

- Harold Schultz was confirmed as a flag raiser in June 2016 following an investigation by independent historians and the Marines.

### FRANKLIN SOUSLEY



Born: Hill Top, Kentucky  
Buried: Elizaville, Kentucky

- Franklin Sousley was one of three flag raisers to be killed on Iwo Jima, being shot by a Japanese sniper while walking down a road.

### MICHAEL STRANK



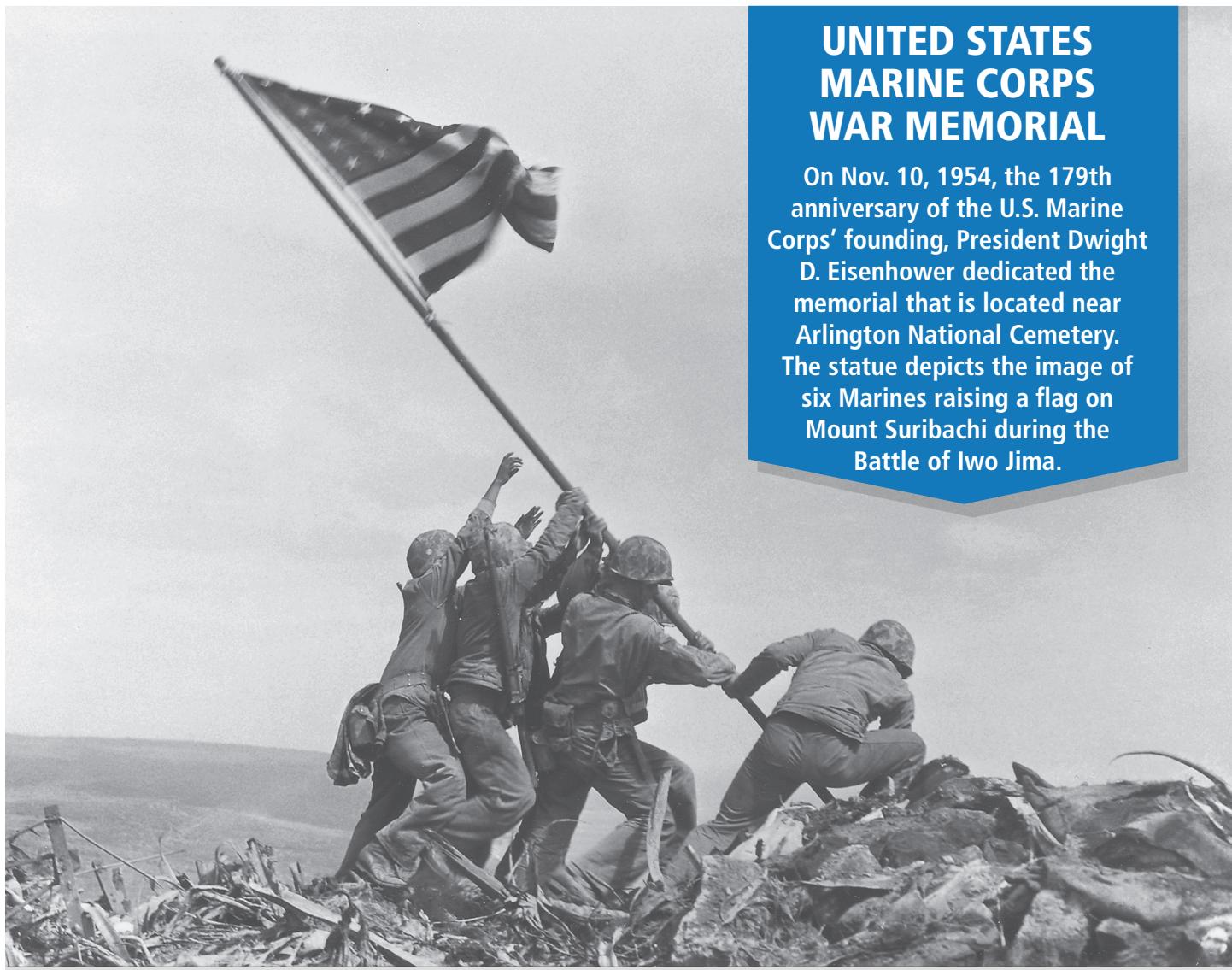
Born: Jarabina, Czechoslovakia  
Buried: Arlington National Cemetery

- Born in what was then Czechoslovakia, Michael Strank was the only immigrant among the flag raisers.

Over the years, historians, the Marine Corps and other organizations have examined the historic Iwo Jima flag-raising photo and determined three individuals were originally misidentified.

#### Previously misidentified:

Hank Hansen until January 1947, John Bradley until June 2016, René Gagnon until October 2019



### MEMORIAL FACTS:

- Dedicated and opened to the public on Nov. 10, 1954.
- Statue is made of plaster cased in bronze.
- The figures stand 32 feet tall, shown raising a 60-foot bronze flagpole from which a cloth flag flies 24 hours a day.
- Figures are armed with either a 16-foot-long M-1 Garand rifle or a 12-foot-long M-1 carbine. Their combat knives are 5 1/2 feet long and their helmets are 3 1/2 feet in diameter.
- Statue rests on a 700-ton concrete base surrounded by 389 tons of polished black granite from Sweden.
- Largest bronze statue in the world at 78 feet tall and weighing 100 tons, including base.
- Located in Arlington, Virginia, on 7 1/2 acres of land managed by the Department of the Interior.
- Total cost was \$850,000, paid for with private donations from Marines and friends of the Marine Corps.
- Based on photograph by Joe Rosenthal, with sculptor Felix de Weldon leading a project that took nine years.

Source: National Park Service



Joe Rosenthal at Iwo Jima (AP)

### ROSENTHAL PHOTO:

- Image above was taken by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal atop Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945.
- Won 1945 Pulitzer Prize for photography.
- Used in promotion of war bond drive May 14-June 30, 1945.
- Often cited as the most reproduced photo in history.
- Used as the inspiration for the statue located at the United States Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington County, Virginia, that was dedicated in 1954.



U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va. (Thomas Slusser, The Tribune-Democrat)

#### Rosenthal quotes:

*"Had I posed that shot, I would, of course, have ruined it. I'd have picked fewer men. ... I would also have made them turn their heads so that they could be identified for AP members throughout the country and nothing like the existing picture would have resulted."*

*"I swung my camera around and held it until I could guess that this was the peak of the action, and shot. I couldn't positively say I had the picture. It's something like shooting a football play; you don't brag until it's developed."*



### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

The National Museum of the Marine Corps opened in 2006 in Triangle, Virginia. Approximately 500,000 people each year visit the site, which provides information about the history of the Corps – from the founding on Nov. 10, 1775, through the Vietnam War.

There is a specific exhibit dedicated to Iwo Jima that includes the flag raised by six Marines on Mount Suribachi. The tilted pyramid glass and concrete roof of the building are designed to resemble the image of the flag raising captured in Joe Rosenthal's historic photo.

Displays about the modern-era Marines are planned to soon be installed and opened to the public.

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