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Photo of Mt. Suribachi - on the island of Iwo Jima - by Phan Lee McCaskill, U.S. Navy. Photo taken on September 28, 2001. Online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

*When you go home  
Tell them for us and say  
For your tomorrow  
We gave our today*

Memorial inscription  
[Temporary Cemetery](#)  
[Iwo Jima Island](#)

An armada of American ships steamed toward the Japanese island of [Iwo Jima](#) in February of 1945. Aboard the vessels were 70,647 United States Marines.

Boys mostly, averaging in age between seventeen and nineteen, they had trained about one year for the

coming battle. They would make an amphibious landing on the black beaches of this tiny Pacific island, 660 miles south of Tokyo.

Most noticeable, as this speck of land came into view, was a “mountain” on its southern end. Rising more than five hundred feet, Mt. Suribachi is a dormant volcano. *Inside* it, as the American ships approached, were dug-in, heavily armed Japanese defenders.

Allied forces had already experienced deadly encounters with Japanese soldiers on other Pacific islands. But Iwo Jima would be significantly worse.

*This* piece of windswept land, totaling eight square miles, was special to the Emperor and his people. *This* island was actually part of Japan. And no foreign invader had set foot on Japanese soil in thousands of years.

Iwo Jima, as the Marines soon learned, would be a fight to the death.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Flags-Of-Our-Fathers>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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## Media Stream



### Temporary Cemetery for the Fifth Marine Division

Image online, courtesy U.S. Department of Defense.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Temporary-Cemetery-for-the-Fifth-Marine-Division>



### Iwo Jima - Soldiers at Temporary Cemetery

Image online, courtesy U.S. Department of Defense.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Iwo-Jima-Soldiers-at-Temporary-Cemetery>



### Photograph of Iwo Jima Cemetery

Image, described above, online courtesy [Landing Ship](#).

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Photograph-of-Iwo-Jima-Cemetery>



Photo # 80-G-310939 Pre-invasion bombardment of Iwo Jima, 17 February 1945

### Aerial Photograph of Iwo Jima

Official U.S. Navy Photograph - # 80-G-310939 - which is now in the collections of the U.S. National Archives. Image online, courtesy Naval History & Heritage Command.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Aerial-Photograph-of-Iwo-Jima>



### Mount Suribachi

Image online, courtesy [USS Wisconsin.org](http://USSWisconsin.org). The *Wisconsin* (BB-64) was a battleship which served during WWII.

PD

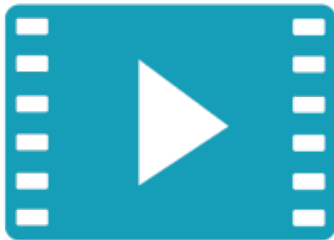
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mount-Suribachi>



### Flags Of Our Fathers

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### Iwo Jima - Summary of Battle

Video clip from U.S. government-produced documentary - *World War II - Rare Colored Film* - online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Iwo-Jima-Summary-of-Battle>