

The flag-raising at Mt. Suribachi was remarkable not just because it happened at all, but because it happened on a mountain fortified from within.

Under the command of General Kuribayashi, Japanese defenders had erected formidable structures *inside* the island, including its famous volcanic hill:

Within Suribachi, a 7-story gallery was undertaken. Specifications called for 35 feet of overhead cover, all caves to be at least 5 feet wide, 35 feet long, and 5 feet high. The walls were plastered, and steam, electricity, and water were piped in. Some caves were shored and cribbed with logs, driftwood, and parts of wrecked aircraft. The blast revetments were of concrete.

*All entrances, in the mountain and elsewhere, were angled at 90 degrees a few feet inside, to protect against flamethrowers, artillery, and demolition charges. Drainage was good and, where necessary, the caves were cleverly vented at the top for escape of steam and sulphur fumes. [Iwo had been dubbed "Sulphur Island."] (*Iwo Jima*, by Richard F. Newcomb, page 43.)*

Kuribayashi's headquarters were similarly constructed:

In the north, two very heavy fortifications were built - one near Motoyama [the airfield] for central communications and control of all artillery fire, and the other just south of Kitano Point.

*The latter, General Kuribayashi's headquarters, consisted of a cave system connected by 500 feet of tunnels as much as 75 feet underground. Three small concreted rooms were the personal war-room of the General, and there were other sections for the staff, coding, and communications. Niches for sleeping were cut in the passageways. (*Iwo Jima*, by Richard F. Newcomb, page 43.)*

Historical footage, incorporated in this documentary, shows the extraordinary difficulty Marines encountered when trying to capture Iwo Jima. Men were attacked, and killed, by opponents they could not even see.

Navajo Code Talkers - hard at work on Iwo Jima as they were elsewhere in the Pacific Theater - helped the Allies to capture Iwo Jima.

After Iwo Jima fell - near the end of March, 1945 - the Allies had a key airbase one step closer to the Japanese home islands. And ... thanks to the footage in this documentary ... Americans at home had their first in-color look at the flag-raising on Mt. Suribachi.

See, also:

[To the Shores of Iwo Jima, Part 1](#)

Credits:

To the Shores of Iwo Jima, Part 2

Producer: Milton Sperling

Production Company: U.S. Government Office of War Information

Editing: Warner Brothers

Video online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives and Archive.org.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/To-the-Shores-of-Iwo-Jima-Part-2>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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