

We Can Not Forget

Suribachi recently had an anniversary which was largely ignored!

What is Suribachi? It is a dormant volcano; only about 530 feet high. It is the highest point on a tiny volcanic island called Iwo Jima which is only about eight square miles in area. It is located about 750 miles south of Tokyo, Japan.

In 1945 the Japanese empire was the sole remaining functional part of the Axis Powers. Germany and Italy, the other two parts of the Axis had already been defeated. All three had combined to conquer the world.

In 1933, Japan had started its expansion into the rest of Asia. It used superior military technology and logistics as well as terror, genocide and forced slavery to impose its will on conquered territories. They proceeded north through Korea, into Manchuria and most of China. Then they proceeded southward through the Philippines and other Pacific Islands as well as most of Indo China - all the while using terror, savagery, and slavery to accomplish their goals. They were getting ready to attack Australia when the allied forces started to free conquered territory. The Allies were moving south to north; island by island. Japanese resistance was sometimes brilliant, but always fierce.

Allied air power was dominant at that time; particularly the heavy bombers, but the Allies had no fighter planes that could reach the Japanese main islands from the existing bases. The bombers flying over Japanese cities had no protection from intercepting Japanese fighters. It was a dangerous task.

On February 19, 1945 the Allied armies landed on Iwo Jima hoping to secure a base close enough to Japan to allow fighters to escort and defend the bombers. Japan's defense of Iwo Jima was brilliant, as well as fanatical. For instance they had some 11 miles of interconnected tunnels, caves and artillery emplacements. They were so well designed that even the enormous shells from the naval ships just offshore had little effect on them. Fighting proceeded viciously, yard by yard – no mercy shown by either side. On February 23, 1945, six US Marines planted a large American flag on the top of Suribachi. It was visible from the entire island. A picture was taken and published world-wide. The picture was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. It gave an unmistakable message that the Allies were going to be successful. They were! On March 26, 1945, Iwo Jima was declared secure.

On February 23, 2023, the seventy-seventh anniversary of the raising of the flag on Suribachi passed by largely unnoticed. We must not let that happen again!