

United States Marine Corps War Memorial

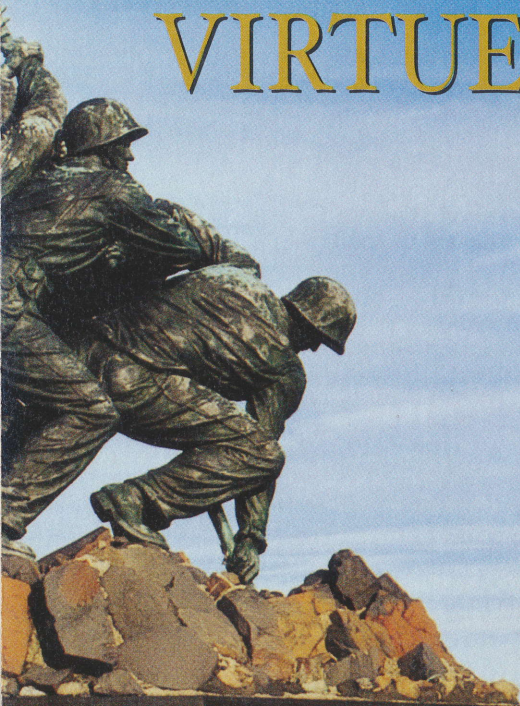
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



George Washington
Memorial Parkway
District of Columbia/Maryland/Virginia



“UNCOMMON VALOR WAS A COMMON VIRTUE”



NPS / TERRY ADAMS

REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775–1783 • FRENCH NAVAL WAR 1798–1801 • TRIPOUR BKA 1805 • WAR OF 1812–1815 • FLORIDA INDIAN WARS 1815–1821

World War II
Memorial
February 19, 1945

REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775–1783 • FRENCH NAVAL WAR 1798–1801
SPANISH WAR 1898 • PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION 1898–1902 • I



U.S. MARINE CORPS

Mount Suribachi dominates the landing beaches where the battle for Iwo Jima began.

A Memorial to Courage and Freedom

A fraction of a second . . . one click of a camera . . . and a powerful image is captured that engrosses a war-weary nation and fuels its resolve to push for final victory. This memorial, inspired by and based upon that image, is a testament to the bravery, honor, and sacrifice of the United States Marine Corps in its long and celebrated history.

The origins of the memorial began on Iwo Jima, a small volcanic island 648 nautical miles south of Tokyo. Iwo Jima's location, midway between the Japanese home islands and American bomber bases in the Mariana Islands, was key to each country's strategy in the final year of World War II.

The Japanese had built airfields on Iwo Jima by February 1945, which they used to launch attacks against U.S. bases in the Marianas and American long-range B-29 bombers. If Americans held the airfields, U.S. fighter planes could escort bombing missions, and damaged bombers could use the island as a sanctuary.

Japanese troops on Iwo Jima, commanded by Lt. Gen. Tad-amichi Kuribayashi, had prepared a formidable series of defenses to protect the island. They vowed to defend it to their death. The Marines had the ability to take the island, but at what cost?

The battle for Iwo Jima lasted 36 days—from February 19 to March 26, 1945. Over 70,000 American troops, mostly Marines, under Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith's command, engaged over 21,000 Japanese defenders in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Almost 7,000 Marines, sailors, and soldiers were killed or missing during the battle and almost 20,000 were wounded. Of the Japanese soldiers, only 1,100 survived.

Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz called the capture of Iwo Jima "as necessary to us in our continuing forward movement toward final victory as it was vital to the enemy in staving off ultimate defeat."

SOISSON • ST. MIHELZ • BLANC MONT • MEUSE-ARGONNE • NICARAGUA
SHALL ISLANDS • MARIANAS ISLANDS • PELELIU • 1945 IWO JIMA • OKINA



U.S. MARINE CORPS



U.S. MARINE CORPS



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Marines dig in near Mount Suribachi as enemy fire sweeps the beach.

Rene Gagnon poses for sculptor Felix W. de Weldon.

Principal Marine engagements are inscribed on the memorial.

The Flag Raisings

Once ashore on February 19, 1945, the 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division, began its assault on Mount Suribachi, an extinct volcano that rises 550 feet to dominate the southern tip of the fan-shaped island. The Marines reached the base of the mountain on the afternoon of February 21; by nightfall the next day they had almost completely surrounded it. On the morning of February 23, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, began the arduous climb up the rough terrain to the top. At about 10:30 am, U.S. troops were thrilled to see a small American flag flying from atop Mount Suribachi.

Pearl Harbor) was raised by Navy hospital corpsman John H. Bradley and Marines Harlon H. Block, Rene A. Gagnon, Ira Hayes, Franklin R. Sousley, and Michael Strank. News photographer Joe Rosenthal caught the flag raising in an inspiring photograph that won him a Pulitzer Prize and inspired creation of the United States Marine Corps War Memorial.

That afternoon a second, larger flag (salvaged from



The second, larger flag is raised as the first flag is lowered.
U.S. MARINE CORPS

Making the Memorial

Sculptor Felix W. de Weldon, then with the U.S. Navy, found Rosenthal's photograph so inspiring that he immediately began sculpting a small wax model of the scene. He was then asked to build two nine-foot-tall versions for a war bond drive. De Weldon was subsequently commissioned to sculpt the present 78-foot-high memorial. Gagnon, Hayes, and Bradley, three survivors of the flag raising (the others had been killed in later phases of the battle for Iwo Jima), posed for the sculptor. De Weldon modeled the other men using photographs and descriptions.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the memorial on November 10, 1954, the 179th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps. The memorial is dedicated to the Marine dead of all wars, and their comrades of other services who fell fighting beside them. No public funds were used building the memorial. Marines, Naval Service members, and friends donated the cost of \$850,000.

Memorial Statistics

The 32-foot-high figures are shown raising a 60-foot flagpole; the flag flies 24 hours a day. They occupy positions similar to those in Rosenthal's historic photograph. As you stand before the memorial (see cover photograph at left), the four figures in front are (left to right) Hayes, Sousley, Bradley, and Block. The two in back are Strank (behind Sousley) and Gagnon (behind Bradley).

The six figures stand on a jumble of igneous rock that represents the volcanic debris atop Mount Suribachi. On the memorial's base, engraved and burnished in gold, are the names and dates of principal Marine Corps campaigns and battles.

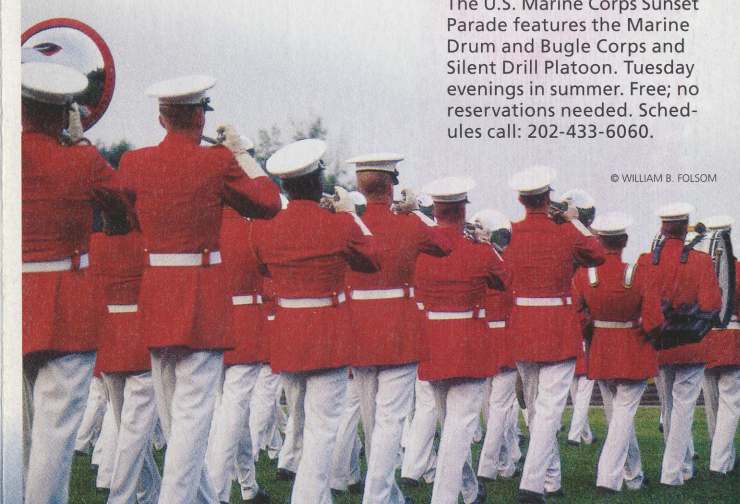
On the base is the tribute of Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz to the fighting men on Iwo Jima: "Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue." Below this is "Semper Fidelis," Latin for "always faithful," motto of the United States Marine Corps.

The United States Marine Corps

The United States Marine Corps was established by the Continental Congress in November 1775 to serve as shipboard infantry for the fledgling Continental Navy. It has evolved into a multi-purpose force dedicated to the defense of freedom in both the United States and abroad.

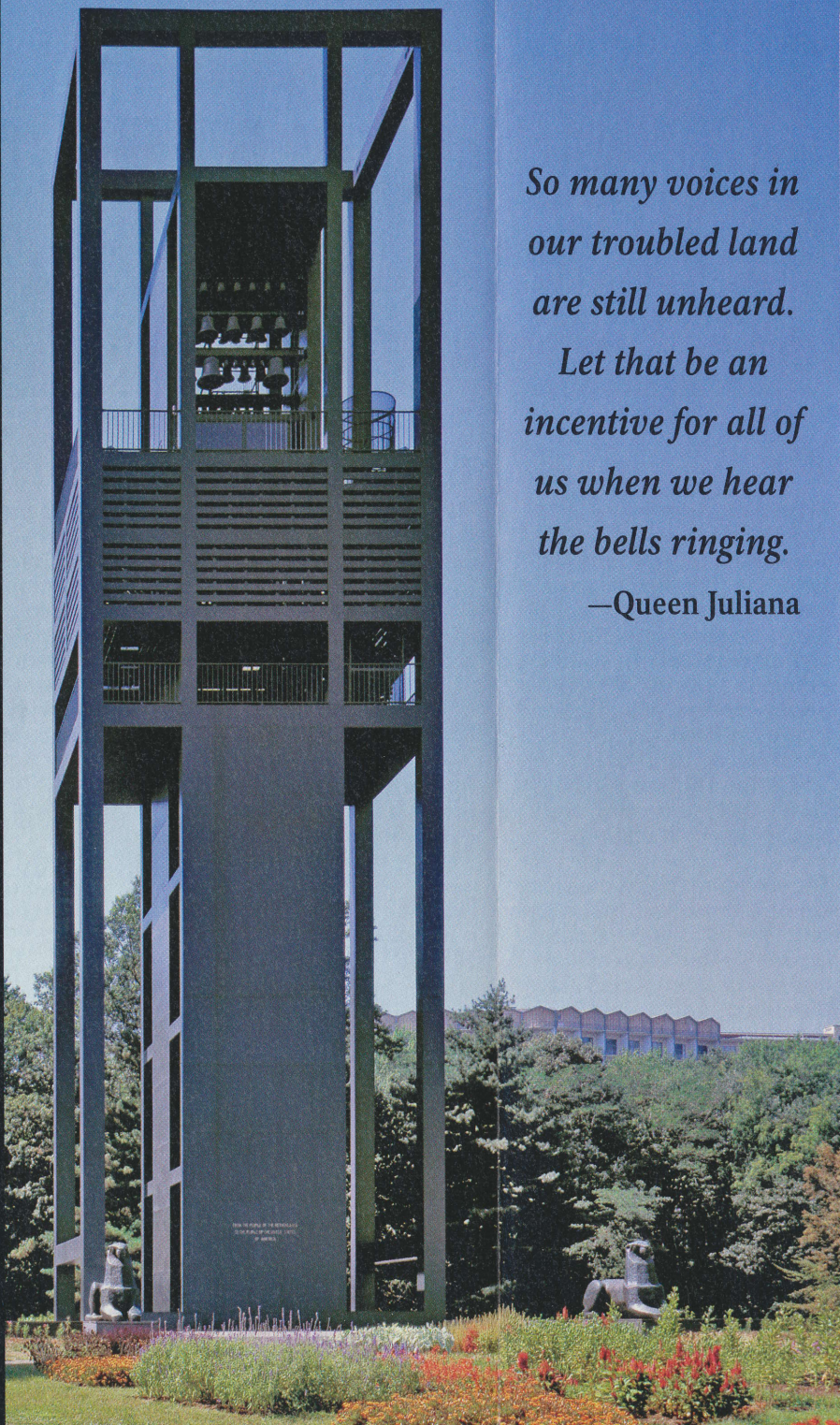
From the first amphibious operations in the American Revolutionary War to today's

efforts to promote freedom around the world, the U.S. Marine Corps has enjoyed a reputation as an effective fighting force. The names of principal campaigns engraved on the memorial are a testament to the sacrifices U.S. Marines have made in service to America.



The U.S. Marine Corps Sunset Parade features the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and Silent Drill Platoon. Tuesday evenings in summer. Free; no reservations needed. Schedules call: 202-433-6060.

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*So many voices in
our troubled land
are still unheard.
Let that be an
incentive for all of
us when we hear
the bells ringing.*
—Queen Juliana



Queen Juliana and President Harry S. Truman during her 1952 visit.

A Gift of Friendship

Near the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial stands a large bell tower, the Netherlands Carillon. This was a gift "From the People of the Netherlands to the People of the United States" in gratitude for American aid during and after World War II. The carillon symbolizes and is dedicated to the friendship between two countries and their common allegiance to the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy.

The idea for this symbolic gift came from a Dutch government official. Endorsed by Queen Juliana, the concept and the drive for funds to build the carillon and tower met with generous response from all sections of the Netherlands.

COVER © CAROL HIGHSMITH
PANORAMA © JOHN SKOWRONSKI



Each bell carries an emblem and verse signifying a group within Dutch society.

On April 4, 1952, during a visit to the United States, Queen Juliana presented a small silver bell to President Truman as a token of the carillon to come.

First installed at a nearby site in 1954, the tower and 49-bell carillon were moved to their present location in 1960. Dutch- and American-sponsored renovations were completed in 1995. A 50th bell was dedicated on May 5 of that year, on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazis.

Design and Construction

The 50-bell carillon is cast from a bronze alloy of about four-fifths copper and one-fifth tin. Its total weight is 61,438 pounds. The largest bell, or bourdon, is six feet, nine inches in diameter and weighs 12,654 pounds; the smallest bell, or treble, is eight inches in diameter and weighs 35 pounds. Each bell carries an emblem, as well as a verse by Dutch poet Ben van Eysselsteijn. The smallest bells contain verses about youth.





Edward M. Nassor, volunteer carillon director, performs on-site.

The tower housing the carillon, designed by Dutch architect Joost W.C. Boks, is an open steel structure reinforced by steel plates. It is about 127 feet high, 25 feet deep, and 36 feet wide, and stands on a quartzite plaza 93 feet square. The plaza is enclosed by a low lava stone wall. Two bronze lions designed by Dutch sculptor Paul Koning guard the approach to the plaza. A rectangular staircase leads to a platform (not open to public). From there a circular staircase winds up to the glass-enclosed playing cabin 83 feet above ground.

Operation of the Carillon
The carillon is tuned to the chromatic scale. Its 50 bells give it two notes more than four octaves. In the playing cabin are the clavier's wooden levers and pedals. These connect directly to the movable inner clappers of the stationary hanging bells, permitting the carillonneur to achieve a full musical expression. Eighteen bells of the carillon are programmed to play a medley of songs by computer at 12 pm and 6 pm daily.

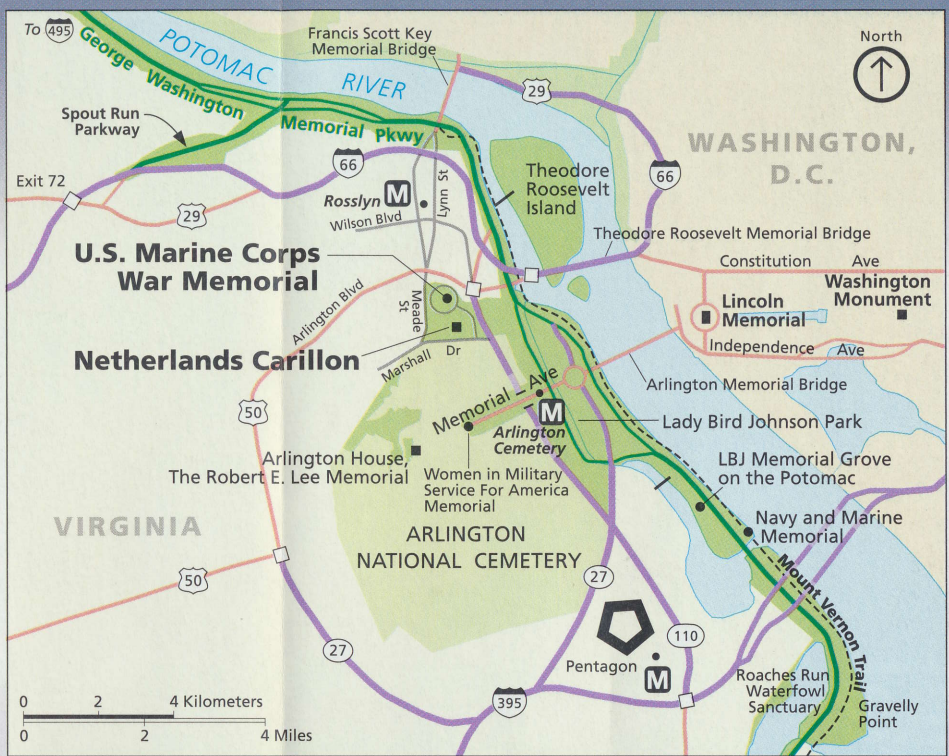
Planning Your Visit

Getting Here The United States Marine Corps War Memorial and Netherlands Carillon are in Virginia along the northern edge of Arlington National Cemetery, across from major monuments and memorials in Washington, D.C. You can get here via the Arlington Cemetery or Rosslyn Metro stations and via U.S. 50 and I-66.

Concerts Carilloners give free concerts on Saturdays from about late May through September. For concert schedules, check the panel on the carillon or contact the park: 703-289-2500; www.nps.gov/gwmp.

Accessibility, Safety, Regulations
The United States Marine Corps War Memorial and Netherlands Carillon are administered by George Washington Memorial Parkway, part of the National Park System. For information about safety and accessibility (service animals are welcome) and firearms regulations contact the park: 703-289-2500; www.nps.gov/gwmp.

To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, please visit www.nps.gov.



More Information
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101
703-289-2500
www.nps.gov/gwmp



Tulips, a national symbol of the Netherlands, bloom each spring in a spectacular display in front of the carillon. Afterwards, some 5,400 other flowers are planted annually in the beds surrounding the memorial. Please don't pick the flowers, so others may enjoy them.

