Even in as bloody and bluntly violent a war as Americans encountered in the Pacific, Iwo Jima, the ultimate expression of death and mayhem, stands out. It was in a class by itself, a meatgrinder smashed by a blunt instrument at exceedingly high cost. Relying upon a purely attritional strategy of “defend and die,” Iwo’s Japanese commander oversaw the construction of thousands of concrete bunkers, pillboxes, blockhouses, and other fighting positions as well as multistory underground command centers and barracks, some as deep as seventy-five feet.

By D-day, February 19, 1945, most of these formidable defenses had been interconnected by eleven miles of underground passageways. Manning these positions were twenty-three thousand Japanese army and navy troops, many of them elite veterans of combat in the Pacific and China. Hundreds of mortars, artillery pieces, and rocket tubes had been painstakingly preregistered, allowing them to hit virtually any spot on the island with their first shot.

The defenders had bonded into a brotherhood born of the hardship they endured building bunkers and underground passageways in the extreme heat laced with sulfurous fumes of the volcanic island. In the words of one Japanese soldier, Iwo “was an island of sulfur, no water, no sparrow, no swallow.” Beyond that, each defender took an oath to fight to the death, to give no ground for any reason.

Following a seventy-four-day air and naval bombardment that the American high command believed had put the bulk of the Japanese defenders at least temporarily out of action, two veteran regiments of the 4th Marine Division alongside two regiments of the newly formed 5th Marine Division—eight battalion landing teams in all—led the way toward the island. Aircraft, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers pummeled ground targets near and far from the landing beaches. As the first wave of Marine-laden amphibian tractors climbed ashore, nearby gunboats fired hundreds of rockets to suppress enemy fire.

Nothing happened. There was no return fire. No Japanese fired at the ships offshore, nor at the oncoming waves of amphibian tractors, nor at the Marines, who were surprised to learn as their feet touched down that all of southern Iwo Jima was covered in a thick mantle of black volcanic ash that offered no purchase for their feet or their shovels.

Shortly, when the nearly eight thousand newly landed Marines had stopped along the shoreline to regroup, every Japanese gun and mortar within range opened fire on the exposed invaders. The gunfire did not die for thirty-four of the bloodiest days of the Pacific War.

*Marines On Iwo Jima: A Photographic Record* is an enhanced and expanded ebook edition of the hardcover and trade paperback book entitled *Iwo Jima: Portrait of a Battle*. The much larger book requires that it be presented in two volumes, each with more than three hundred photos.
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Marines On New Britain
Marines In the Marianas: Vol. 1: Saipan
Marines In the Marianas: Vol, 2: Tinian and Guam
This book is respectfully dedicated to the gallant American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who stood their ground and achieved the stunning victory in the Pacific
Editor’s Note

Marines on Iwo Jima is a blend of Eric Hammel’s 2006 pictorial book, Iwo Jima: Portrait of a Battle, and the Iwo Jima chapter of his 2010 pictorial, Islands of Hell, which was composed of many photos that did not appear in the earlier book. In all, about six hundred distinct Iwo Jima photos appeared in both volumes. Many other photos have not appeared in the earlier volumes nor, quite possibly, anywhere.

The text for Marines On Iwo Jima is drawn directly from Iwo Jima: Portrait of a Battle, and many of the captions are drawn directly from both earlier volumes. The title and cover design of this volume are meant to comport with the series of Eric Hammel’s pictorials covering the entire Marine Corps Pacific War offensive, from Guadalcanal through Okinawa.

Due to the number of photographs on display, Marines On Iwo Jima is presented in two volumes.
I would like to start with a little story about me and “The Flag Raising at Iwo Jima”—The Photo—that I have no doubt has been repeated again and again in other places and times over the sixty years since The Photo’s first publication. I told this story to Joe Rosenthal.

In 1955 I was a student in Mrs. Lesches’s fourth-grade class at Logan Elementary School in Philadelphia. I sat at the last desk in the second row, from which I could look straight out the door to the marble-wainscoted hallway. Opposite the door, and perfectly framed in it from my vantage point, was a colorized print of The Photo.

I was a good student, and Mrs. Lesches gave me a little slack; I could skylark out the door if she wasn’t writing on the blackboard or speaking. This was never mentioned; I just picked up on it. So, for the year 1955, I looked out at The Photo every school day, and pretty soon I fell in love with it. I fell in love with my idea of it.
I grew up in the company of World War II vets. My own father was one. I knew an Iwo Jima vet. And I was raised in an especially patriotic time.

It stayed with me. In time I found that I could write—indeed, that I wanted to write. In more time I decided to write for my living. In pretty much no time I began to write military history—specifically Pacific War history. And so here I am, more than fifty years and forty or fifty military history books later, relating a personal story that relates to a photo that relates that especially poignant and nearly magical long-ago moment on far-off Iwo Jima. The Photo wasn’t the only thing that brought me to my vocation, and it wasn’t the first. But I have no doubt that that school year of staring at it and imagining heroism crystallized all the other events of my youth that brought me here.

Eric Hammel
Northern California
Winter 2012
During the first year of the Pacific War, the Marine Corps devoted few resources to documenting the war on film. Very few photographers were deployed to the Pacific through the late summer of 1943, and they were not trained nor often called upon to act as combat photographers. That worldview, the name, and the training to go with it, did not emerge in the field until late 1943, at Bougainville, Cape Gloucester, and Tarawa.

The photographic record visibly perked up at both Bougainville and Tarawa as more and better-organized photographers with a better idea about what to photograph moved into battle with Marine combat units. This later photographic record is much larger and visibly mounts in intensity as one follows the Marines across the wide Pacific. The photos are of better quality, more immediate, more sympathetic toward the combat Marines who have to assault the beaches, brave the fire, take the hills, comb the valleys and forests, and reduce all manner of Japanese defensive schemes that mark the long, long road to victory. The photos become more knowing and more insightful as the photographers begin to share the day-to-day, moment-by-moment, life-and-death struggles their combatant comrades are thrown into. Indeed, as the photographers got more battle experience under their own belts, they became more hardbitten—more fatalistic and less cautious, yet more willing to come to grips with the many faces of war that expressed themselves all around them as other young men fought and died on the shared battlefield, in the shared state of privation. That will be evident as you encounter the photographic record in this volume.

Introduction
I wish to thank the indomitable staff at the Still Pictures branch of the National Archives and Records Administration, especially the ever-helpful, ever-patient, ever-cheerful Theresa M. Roy and Donna Larker. So too my many old friends on the staff of the Marine Corps University Archive at Quantico, Virginia.

Major Norman Hatch, who in my mind at least is the dean of Marine combat photographers, has always made himself available to offer advice. Norm formed and personally oversaw the 5th Marine Division photographic section for Iwo Jima, so to a large degree this book is a product of his dedication, ingenuity, and bravery.

I also particularly thank my friend and fellow author John R. Bruning Jr. for sharing his photos, his hands-on photo-scanning assistance, his deep knowledge of digital scanning equipment and techniques, and his insights into best use of the National Archives’ Still Pictures collection.

Many thanks, also, to my old and dear friend Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Mark Hacala, for providing photos of the Navy Hospital Corps Medal of Honor recipients; and to Colonel Walt Ford of Leatherneck Magazine for his never-failing kindness as well as some valuable instant research; to Jon Dodd and the Marine Corps Association art staff for digging out and scanning the frontispiece.
Glossary and Guide to Abbreviations

A6M  Imperial Navy Mitsubishi single-engine Zero fighter
Amtrac  Amphibian tractor
B-24  U.S. Army Air Forces Consolidated Liberator four-engine heavy bomber
B-25  U.S. Army Air Forces North American Mitchell twin-engine medium bomber; same as PBJ
B-29  U.S. Army Air Forces Boeing Superfortress four-engine very heavy bomber
BAR  Browning Automatic Rifle
Bazooka  2.36-inch shoulder-fired antitank rocket launcher
C6N  Imperial Navy Nakajima Myrt single-engine carrier reconnaissance plane
D-day  Invasion day
D+1, etc.  D-day plus 1 day, etc.
F4U  U.S. Navy/Marine Corps Vought Corsair single-engine fighter
F6F  U.S. Navy Grumman Hellcat single-engine fighter;
F6F-5(N)  U.S. Navy/Marine Corps F6F night-fighter variant
FM-2  U.S. Navy General Motors Wildcat ground-support fighter
FMF  Fleet Marine Force
FMFPac  Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
G4M  Imperial Navy Mitsubishi Betty twin-engine medium bomber
H-hour  The time set for an invasion or assault to begin
Knee mortar  Japanese Type 89 50mm spring-activated grenade launcher
LCI  Landing craft, infantry
LCI(G)  Landing craft, infantry, gunboat
LCI(R)  Landing craft, infantry, rocket ship
LCM    Landing craft, medium
LCT    Landing craft, tank
LCVP   Landing craft, vehicle, personnel
LSD    Landing ship, dock
LSM    Landing ship, medium
LST    Landing ship, tank
LVT    Landing vehicle, tracked; amphibious tractor
LVT(A) Landing vehicle, tracked, armored; amphibious tank
M3     Stuart light tank
M4     Sherman medium tank
M-1    U.S. Garand .30-caliber semiautomatic infantry rifle
MAG    Marine Air Group
OA-10  U.S. Army Air Forces Consolidated twin-engine air-sea rescue
       plane; same as a PBY
OY     U.S. Marine Corps light spotter plane from various manufacturers
P-38   U.S. Army Air Forces Lockheed Lightning twin-engine fighter
P-47   U.S. Army Air Forces Thunderbolt single-engine long-range fighter
P-51   U.S. Army Air Forces North American Mustang single-engine long-
       range fighter
P-61   U.S. Army Air Forces Northrop Black Widow twin-engine, two-
       place, radar-guided night fighter
PBJ    U.S. Marine Corps North American twin-engine medium bomber/
       gunship; same as B-25
PBM    U.S. Navy Martin Mariner twin-engine patrol bomber
PB2Y   U.S. Navy Consolidated Coronado four-engine amphibian patrol
       bomber
PB4Y-1 U.S. Navy Consolidated Liberator four-engine patrol bomber;
       identical to the B-24
PB4Y-2 U.S. Navy Consolidated Privateer four-engine patrol bomber;
       generally the same as B-24 with a single tail fin
PBY    U.S. Navy Consolidated Catalina twin-engine patrol bomber
R4D    U.S. Navy/Marine Douglas Dakota twin-engine transport; same as
       Army C-47 and civilian DC-3
RCT    Regimental combat team
SB2C   U.S. Navy/Marine Corps Curtiss Helldiver single-engine scout/-
       dive-bomber
SBD  U.S. Marine Corps Douglas Dauntless single-engine scout-/dive-bomber
SPM  Self-propelled mount (M3 halftrack with 75mm antitank/assault gun)
TBM  U.S. Navy/Marine Corps General Motors Avenger single-engine torpedo/light bomber
UDT  Underwater demolitions team
VAC  V Amphibious Corps
VJ-Day Victory over Japan Day
VMF  Marine Fighting Squadron
VMF(N) Marine Night Fighting Squadron
VMO  Marine Observation Squadron
VMR  Marine Transport Squadron
VMSB Marine Scout-Bomber Squadron
VMTB Marine Torpedo Squadron
VTR  Vehicle, tank recovery
Weasel  U.S. amphibian jeep
PROGRESS OF THE ATTACK
VAC, IWO JIMA

1000  500  0  1000
YARDS
Chapter 8
Beach Assault

A Textbook Landing

Nothing happened. There was no return fire. No Japanese fired at the ships offshore, nor at the oncoming waves of amtracs, nor at the assaulting Marines who were surprised to learn as their feet touched down that all of southern Iwo Jima was covered in a thick mantle of black volcanic ash—not simply black sand. The ash offered no purchase for their feet or their shovels.

Ahead lay another surprise: a 15-foot terrace that rose sharply from just in back of the beaches. Most of the armored amtracs, which fired their 75mm howitzers as they landed, did not have enough speed on to scale this slippery slope; some did, but many others returned to the water and fired on the few suspect features the gunners could see.

Wave upon wave landed on eerily safe beaches. Three Marine divisions had come to fight for Iwo Jima, and two-thirds of two of them appeared to be getting a free pass.
An LVT(A)4 armored amtrac accompanies the first troops of 2/27 to land on Beach Red-2 at about 0900 hours, February 19, 1945. There is no response at all from the defenders. (Official USMC Photo)
A reinforced Marine infantry company of 1/28 has just landed on Beach Green. According to the plan, these troops will hunker down and reorganize until more troops from their battalion have landed behind them, then open a drive across Iwo Jima’s narrow neck, to isolate Mount Suribachi. Note that amtracs at the water’s edge have just landed another company. (Official USMC Photo)
More follow-on troops have landed on Beach Green, so the lead companies bound forward to the next line of cover. By now, Marines have discovered that the so-called black sand is really volcanic ash in which it is difficult for heavily burdened assault troops to gain secure footing. So far, the Japanese have not opened fire. (Official USMC Photo)
On Beach Blue-1, in the 4th Marine Division Zone, access to the beach is thwarted by a traffic jam of amtracs, so this LVT(A)4 must return to the sea to try to find a way in to support the infantry. (Official USMC Photo)
Fourth Division machine gunners advance to the front to join the leading assault rifleman. In the right foreground is a Marine’s gear; the owner might have been shot by a Japanese infantryman in a nearby position. So far, only individual and small groups of Japanese on the spot have opened fire. Otherwise, this is a textbook landing that is evolving pretty much as planned. (Official USMC Photo)
Fifth Division infantrymen warily approach the summit of the fifteen-foot terrace that backs most of the landing beaches. The terrace is excellent cover for now, but the slippery volcanic ash makes it very difficult to negotiate while carrying full combat gear. (Official USMC Photo)
It is not quite time to resume the advance as follow-on waves arrive with mortars, tanks, and other support weapons. As some Marines keep an eye on the hostile terrain ahead, others begin to experiment with digging into the liquidlike volcanic ash. (Official USMC Photo)
Air and artillery continue to pound Mount Suribachi as, in its shadow on Beach Green—and no doubt under observation from the heights—the two leading battalions of the 28th Marines prepare to jump off to Iwo Jima’s far shore. (Official USMC Photo)
At the other end of the beachhead, 1/25 and 3/25 have landed abreast on Beach Blue-1 to find the beach less treacherous all around than the beaches to their left. (Note how relaxed the smoker, a company radioman, looks.) The two veteran battalions, now into their fourth amphibious assault, are charged with attacking northward along the beach to seize Blue-2 on foot and then advance through a shell-cratered moonscape toward the rock quarry to anchor the entire VAC line. So far there has been little gunfire heard on the Marine far right flank. (Official USMC Photo)
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