

**Message on the Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima**

*February 19, 2026*

Today our Nation commemorates the 81st anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, a monumental struggle that advanced the cause of victory in the Pacific Theater during the Second World War.

Under a clear morning sky on February 19, 1945, the United States marines prepared to storm the beaches of Iwo Jima, a remote but heavily fortified island 750 miles from Tokyo. For years, American forces had been locked in a great island-by-island campaign across the Pacific against imperial Japan. Iwo Jima's capture promised a vital foothold for Allied operations and a critical step toward the enemy's homeland.

When the first marines charged ashore, they came under fire from Japanese defenders hidden in bunkers and tunnels carved into the island's rocky terrain. Determined to take the island, marines pressed deeper inland over 5 punishing weeks, backed by the thunder of American Naval firepower and fighting yard by yard through smoke, ash, and the fire of guns amid constant shelling and ferocious infantry charges.

As the brutal fight raged on, individual acts of unmatched courage began to define the battle. Among the countless heroes was the legendary Corporal Hershel "Woody" Williams. Tasked with destroying deeply entrenched enemy positions, Woody advanced time and again under intense gunfire, armed with nothing but a flamethrower. For more than 4 hours, he singlehandedly cleared a path for American tanks after the rest of his comrades fell, retreating from the front line five times to resupply before returning and successfully completing his mission. Woody's extraordinary valor earned him the Medal of Honor. In total, 27 Medals of Honor were awarded for actions at Iwo Jima, the most of any single battle in World War II.

After 36 days of brutal combat, Japanese resistance ended, securing Iwo Jima's place among the most consequential and hard-fought battles in American history. Early in the campaign, the raising of the Stars and Stripes atop Iwo Jima's highest peak, Mount Suribachi, became an enduring image, an unmistakable symbol of American resolve, sacrifice, and victory in the Pacific.

Of the 70,000 servicemen who fought at Iwo Jima, nearly 7,000 of America's finest marines gave their lives on the island in defense of our freedom, offering the full measure of their devotion to the Republic they served until their very last breath. As we commemorate the Battle of Iwo Jima and as we celebrate 250 years of American independence, we remember the enormous sacrifices of the Greatest Generation, and we renew our solemn promise to honor their legacy by defending the liberties they secured.

*Categories:* Letters and Messages : Battle of Iwo Jima, message on anniversary.

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