

Those words were etched into history and onto the Marine Corps Monument atop Mt Suribachi by ADM Nimitz after the Battle of Iwo Jima (19 February 1945 - 14 March 1945). These words were used to describe the heroic actions of the Marine Corps troops during the invasion. This battle, long forgotten by many, contained the bloodiest and toughest fighting of World War II on an island 5 1/2 miles long and 2 1/2 miles wide. On 19 February 1985, these same words were used again to describe the actions of both the American and the Japanese veterans by LtGEN Charles Cooper, Commander, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific, at the 40th Anniversary Ceremony held at the site of a newly installed memorial stone just above the famous Invasion Beach on Iwo Jima.

The Return to Iwo Jima 40th Anniversary Commemoration, sponsored jointly by the United States and Japanese Veterans Associations was held successfully on 19 February 1985 with the participation of 250 American veterans and 100 Japanese veterans. The Commemoration Ceremony began with the National Anthems of both nations and ended, after a prayer service and brief speeches including a message from the President of the United States, with the "Handshake of Peace" and reunion of veterans from both sides. The veterans were then given a tour of selected sites on the island including the LORAN Station before returning to the Japanese mainland later in the day. Bouyed by clear, warm weather, the participants from both sides were smiling and spontaneous, and many openly displayed emotion on revisiting a remembered battle site or meeting a former adversary.

Although LORAN Station Iwo Jima has only 28 personnel assigned, we were called upon to provide support for the event. During the initial planning stages, the Anniversary was originally supposed to be a relatively quiet and serene occasion for returning veterans. The initial plans could not have been more wrong. American and Japanese forces had to closely work together to coordinate what could have been a massive logistical nightmare.

The LORAN Station initially became involved in the event during late October 1984 when a Hollywood producer and director visited the station to plan for filming a documentary covering the returning veterans. From that time until the 20 February 1985, we became more and more involved. Our boss, Commander, Coast Guard Section Far East, ran as much "interference" for us as possible and we could not have provided quality "on-island" support without their assistance. During the 4 months prior to the event, we were entertaining up to 3 flights per week in support of, coordination of, or promoting publicity for the event. Coordination between the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and the Japanese Air Self Defense Force on the

island and the LORAN Station became almost a daily occurrence towards the end of the final preparations. On 15 February 1985, the advance camera crew and director and the USMC artist arrived. At 0430 on 17 February 1985, the "real" work began as initial communications between the USS JUNEAU and the LORAN Station were made. At 0600, during a driving rainstorm, the first LCU from the USS JUNEAU landed with USMC personnel and supplies. From then until dark, the LCU brought 150 USMC personnel, supplies, and 35 vehicles to the island. The Marines set up camp 100 yards from the LORAN Station in a grassy clearing. On 18 February, a full dress rehearsal was held with Japanese, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard participation. The Marines discovered that Iwo Jima is still a very austere island to travel around on. D-Day arrived on 19 February and all island personnel were anxious and excited. The day started with an island ceremony between the Coast Guard LORAN Station and the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force by conducting a joint colors ceremony atop MT Suribachi. This was the first time that such a ceremony has been conducted between the Coast Guard and the Japanese on the island. It was a very moving moment as the flags of both nations were raised simultaneously and it truly represented the comradery and esprit-de-corps between the Coast Guard and the Japanese on the island. All of the 14 planes arrived on time and the ceremony was conducted on schedule. Considering the distances between mainland Japan (750 miles) and Iwo Jima and Okinawa (800 miles) and Iwo Jima, the event could not have been orchestrated better. The participants departed at dusk and returned to mainland Japan, but our work was not over as we had to assist the Marines the next day in returning to the USS JUNEAU for their return back to Okinawa. The Marines 2nd "invasion of Iwo Jima was a success. This time there were no casualties!

The Anniversary was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the returning veterans as it was for the LORAN Station. All of us will remember the emotions showed by the returning veterans as they met each other for the first time. Life on a remote island can indeed be interesting!

Initial Draft: LT J. D. Allen, 3 March 1985