

# LOCKLEED NEWS



## | What Does Veterans Day Mean to YOU?

Veterans Day. Every year on November 11 we honor the men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces. That date on the calendar is significant because in 1918 at the 11th hour, on the 11th day of the 11th month, an armistice (temporary cessation of hostilities, the end of fighting) between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect. The formal end of World War I occurred the following June when the Treaty of Versailles was signed.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the first Armistice Day holiday to commemorate the heroism and sacrifice of those who gave their lives for the freedom of everyone. In 1926, Congress passed a resolution to declare November 11th a federal holiday. Then, in 1954, in the wake of World War II and the Korean War Congress changed the wording to Veterans Day. On Veterans Day, we focus on honoring “America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.” – U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

World War I was called “The Great War” and “The War to End All Wars” – sadly, it was not the end of all wars. A surge in enlistment and patriotism occurred during World War II and in the period following September 11, 2001. Overall, though, over the past 24 years the number of veterans in America has decreased, whether by lower participation in the armed forces or the older veterans being deceased. As of January 2023, 6.5% of the American population are veterans, according to History.com.

Every year, on November 11th, at precisely 11:00 a.m., a wreath is laid at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington DC during a ceremony to honor and thank all who have served in the United States Armed Forces. This year, take a moment of silence, and ponder what Veterans Day means to you. God bless you, and God Bless America.



In honor of the Marine Corps birthday on 10 November, we looked at one of the definitive battles of World War II, Iwo Jima.

Among the Americans who served on Iwo Island, uncommon valor was a common virtue.

***Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz***

## **| Why Take Iwo Jima?**

Capturing Iwo Jima signaled the start of the American air offensive against Japan. It was the first place in the Japanese territories where Marines hoisted the American flag and was considered the front door to the Japanese homeland. But why was it so important?

### **Strategic**

Over the major cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya B-52s faced anti-aircraft fire, swarming by enemy fighter planes and even Kamikaze pilots taking them out in the air.

Ground advances reduced Japanese occupation in the Pacific, and we began attacking the enemy homeland with B-29s based in the Mariana Islands, just north of Guam. From one of those islands, Saipan, B-29s faced a 3,000-mile round trip to Japan and dropped their bombs from nearly 30,000 feet, reducing their target accuracy.



### **Tactical**

Because of the distance from Saipan to Japan, the B-29s had no escort by air force jets and no place to



stop on the way. The Pacific region was known for fowl weather including typhoons, tropical gales and winds up to 200 miles per hour. These conditions limited the speed a B-29 could fly, took them off track and reduced the accuracy of bombs. The U. S. suffered heavy losses of personnel and equipment.

## Iwo Jima

Iwo Jima (750 miles nearly due south of Tokyo) is about 11.5 square miles of mountainous terrain and volcanic soil that made the island scrubby and mostly uninhabitable. The Japanese had three operational airfields and set up their base in underground artillery bunkers. They attacked our B-29s while they were enroute from Saipan to the mainland and back.

The capture of Iwo Jima allowed America to begin an air offensive against Japan, with devastating effects. Many believe the day our American flag was planted on Mt. Suribachi, it speeded up the timeline to ending the war. In honor of the birthday of the Marine Corps on 10 November, Corporal Marshall E. Harris, remembers that day:



*“Raising the flag on Iwo Jima on the fifth day did not signal the end of the hellish battle. Progress had been slow for the first four days, and we weren’t sure if this island could be taken. The flag did more than expected. The sight of it on top of Mt. Suribachi gave everyone a shot in the arm and fired up the troops. It gave us all a dose of adrenalin and a feeling that – WE ARE GOING TO WIN! WE ARE GOING TO TAKE THIS DESPICABLE PIECE OF WASTELAND!”*

***The raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years.***

***James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy***

