

# Iwo Jima

The Battle of Iwo Jima (19 February – 26 March 1945), was a major battle in which the US fought for and captured the island of Iwo Jima from the Japanese. This month-long battle included some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of the War in the Pacific of World War II.

The Japanese positions were heavily fortified, with a dense network of bunkers, hidden artillery positions, and 18 km of underground tunnels. The Americans on the ground were aided by extensive naval artillery and the Navy and Marine Corps aviators had complete air supremacy. This invasion was the first American attack on Japanese home territory, and the Japanese soldiers and marines defended their positions tenaciously with no thought of surrender. The Japanese general in charge never considered surrendering to the Americans to save his men, and he and his officers had vowed to fight to the death.

Iwo Jima was also the only battle by the U.S. Marines in which the overall American casualties (killed and wounded) exceeded those of the Japanese, although Japanese combat deaths were thrice those of the Americans throughout the battle. Of the 22,000 Japanese soldiers at the beginning of the battle, only 216 were taken prisoner. The rest of the Japanese soldiers on the island were killed or missing and presumed dead.

Despite the bloody fighting and severe casualties on both sides, the Japanese defeat was assured from the start. The Americans possessed an overwhelming superiority in arms and numbers. These factors, coupled with the impossibility of Japanese retreat or reinforcement, ensured an American victory.

The battle was immortalized by Joe Rosenthal's photograph of the raising of the U.S. flag on top of

the 545 ft Mount Suribachi by five U.S. Marines and one U.S. Navy battlefield Hospital Corpsman. The photograph records the second flag-raising on the mountain, both of which took place on the fifth day of the 35-day battle. [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Iwo\\_Jima](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Iwo_Jima)]

