



# TEXAS IWO JIMA LETTER

## ***“I love this Museum!” Navy Veteran Neil Bagley honored as MMA Iwo Jima Museum Volunteer of the Year!***

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**“The Iwo Jima victory came at a terrible price. By the time the American troops had taken the entire island, over 17,000 Marines were wounded and more than 5,000 Marines and 1,200 Navy personnel had been killed.**

**“Within a few days after raising the flag, three of the six flag raisers were killed fighting for the island. It is said to be ‘the costliest battle in Marine Corps history’”- Ila Ray White**

“Museum volunteers are usually the first people visitors see,” said MMA Superintendent Col R. Glenn Hill, addressing the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Iwo Jima Volunteer Luncheon March 2.

“You all play an important part in accomplishing the mission of the Marine Military Academy. If you know of someone of good character who fits in here, we’d welcome them as Iwo Jima Museum volunteers,” Col Hill said.

Gloria Boling, the Iwo Jima Museum Director then announced Neil Bagley as Iwo Jima Volunteer of the Year. “Neil brought in more volunteers than anyone. He’s a man of good humor and we’ve all enjoyed working with him. Neil is a pleasure to work with, said Boling.”

“I love this museum,” said Bagley. “I’ve always been a history buff. There is no one I (See pg 3)



Iwo Jima Museum Assistant Director Gracie Galarza presents Neil Bagley with Iwo Jima Museum Volunteer of the Year Award.

## **Harlon Block buddy, Glen Cleckler, among 350 at MMA Iwo Parade**



MMA Marketing Director Andi Atkinson interviewing Eugene Gutierrez, WWII 1st Special Service Force, Airborne, McAllen, at Iwo Jima Parade, see page 5. [More MMA Photos.](#)

(By permission)

By FERNANDO DEL VALLE, Valley Morning Star HARLINGEN — Glen Cleckler says Marine Cpl.

Harlon Block’s spirit fills his heart when he gazes at the Iwo Jima Monument.

Cleckler and Block were Weslaco High School students when they enlisted together in the U.S. Marine Corps in December 1942.

Cleckler, now of Harlingen, was among the crowd Wednesday as Marine Military Academy commemorated the 69th anniversary of the World War II Pacific Theater’s epic Battle of Iwo Jima.

About 350 stood as rows of cadets marched in front of MMA’s Iwo Jima Monument.

Cleckler, 89, and 16 other Iwo Jima veterans saluted the flag that fluttered over the monument in the late afternoon.

The monument depicts Block and five others as they planted the U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945, four days after some 30,000 U.S. Marines began landing on Iwo Jima for what would become a successful month-long battle.

Block is depicted at the base of the flag pole.

A mortar blast killed Block on March 1, 1945, on Iwo Jima. “That’s one of the things I think about every time I come here,” Cleckler, a retired educator, said as he (See pg. 6)

# Iwo Jim Museum Volunteer Luncheon: GREAT time!

Color Guard



## Texas Iwo Jima Letter

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**Major thanks to Col Hill, Gloria Boling, Gracie Galarza, the MMA Cadet Color Guard and all who made the 2014 Volunteer Lunch such a wonderful event!**

## Neil Bagley , Iwo Jima Museum Volunteer of the Year

(Cont. from pg 1) respect more than the WWII generation and it is a thrill for me to be able to meet so many of them here; and, all the rest of the vets who come through here. I even talked one of them out of his uniform. Volunteering here is one of my most favorite things to do.”

Bagley’s first love was the Marine Corps. “I wanted to join the Marines. But I also wanted technical training so the Marine recruiter recommended the Navy. I never considered the Army. I became an electronics officer on destroyers serving from 1959 to 1980, going from E-7 Chief to LT LDO (“Loud, Dumb & Obnoxious”) to CWO-2.

Bagley’s service included expertise on guided missile systems , 13 Mediterranean cruises and arranging boxing matches at Guantanamo.

“Neil’s funny! He’s fun to work with,” says Gracie Galarza, Assistant Director of the Iwo Jima Museum.

Bagley, like all the Iwo Jima Volunteers, is an expert on the Iwo Jima battle. He can be found at the Museum on Tuesdays. Ask for his barber’s name.

Neil and wife Barbara live in Rio Hondo and Plymouth, Maine.



Upper right, Iwo Jima Museum Director Gloria Boling, Neill Bagley and wife Barbara with Col R. Glenn Hill. Lower right, Neil Bagley talked his buddy Walter Fleming out of his WWII Navy uniform which is now displayed at the Iwo Jima Museum. Lower left, Neill with WWII Navy Dan Montes, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Top left, Nice Guy Neil Bagley’s barber?

## Iwo Jima Museum Director Boling, volunteers honor volunteers Ron Losey and Tom King



Above, Iwo Jima Museum Director Gloria Boling memorializes museum volunteers Tom King and Ron Losey. Left, volunteers gather in their Iwo Jima Museum.

## Greetings from the Iwo Jima Museum



HI!!!!

The demolition of the Chapel was sad but now there is a big empty spot for new life--- -what will it be? We can only dream and maybe it will come true soon. Winter Texans are going back home.

We will miss them, and we look forward to their return next Winter.

We had a great turn out for the General H. M. Smith Dinner. Iwo Jima Award Recipient Clint Bruce, a former Navy SEAL was a terrific speaker who really encouraged everyone to act on our "Soul" purpose in life. MMA hosted the 2014 Alumni Reunion on April 11 and 12. The MMA Parents Organization is very active on campus. It will be hosting [Spring Fling](#) for cadets and parents on April 25 and 26. The month of April is very busy trying to get every-

To MMA.

thing done before the end of school year and graduation. And then follows summer camp! I can't wait for the excitement! Have a great Summer!

**The Museum is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

You may contact us at 956-421-9234 or [visitorcenter@mma-tx.org](mailto:visitorcenter@mma-tx.org).

Hope to see you soon. God Bless Our Troops.

Gloria Boling, Director  
Iwo Jima Museum & Gift Shop

Chapel demo:  
**Future Iwo Museum site?**



**[Put the Iwo Jima Museum on your Bucket List!](#)**



**MMA Cadets loved Clint Bruce!** U.S. Navy SEAL officer and decorated United States Naval Academy athlete Clint Bruce was the recipient of the Iwo Jima Leadership Award at the **General H. M. Smith Dinner** April 4 at MMA. Past recipients of the prestigious Iwo Jima Leadership Award include former Secretary of State George Schultz, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (Texas), Gov. Rick Perry (Texas), former NFL star Vince Papale and Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr. (Texas). Bruce is now the founder and president of Trident Response Group, a global intelligence, intervention and rescue group based in Dallas. He is also the founder of Carry the Load, a non-profit organization that exists to re-establish the true meaning of Memorial Day. Bruce graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1997. A four-year starter for the Midshipmen, he remains one of the most decorated athletes in the academy's history. (MMA photo)

### **[Carry The Load](#)**

Dallas, TX (PRWEB) The vision of Carry The Load is to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day by connecting Americans to the sacrifices of our military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel, and to support charitable organizations around the country that help them and their families.

"What was meant to be a day of remembering the sacrifices of our fallen military men and women has become a weekend of sales, barbecues and mini-vacations," said Clint Bruce, co-founder of Carry The Load.

**"The true purpose of Carry The Load calls all of us to 'never forget to remember' those who made that ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms."**

This year, Carry The Load will log more than 2,000 miles across the nation with relay points in more than 230 cities. Carry The Load encourages people in communities and towns throughout the route to join the National Relay in an effort to remember the true meaning of Memorial Day and share "who they are carrying"

Through the efforts of Carry The Load, we are all able to express our respect and admiration for those who sacrifice for us every day," added Bruce. "Memorial Day is the perfect time for family members and friends to take time to show their appreciation by participating in the Relay, whether that is walking, biking, running, raising money or just cheering on those walking through your community."

Visit [CarryTheLoad.org](http://CarryTheLoad.org) to join the National Relay, make a donation, or to share your story. WHO are YOU carrying?



# 350 attend Iwo Parade!

## (Valley Star from pg. 1)

remembered Block. "It makes you go back in time. I have mixed emotions."



Glen Cleckler

Retired Col. Glenn Hill led the Iwo Jima veterans as they inspected the cadets at the parade's end.

"It's was a great turnout," Hill, the academy's superintendent, said in an interview. "We got a number of Iwo Jima veterans. It's an honor for us to be here to honor the sacrifices they made."

The ceremony drew veterans and Winter Texans from across the Rio Grande Valley.

For Joyce Zimm, the parade marked the first time she watched the cadets commemorate the battle's anniversary.

"It was very, very inspiring and very impressive," said Zimm, a retired computer programmer from Barnes, Wis. "They're keeping the history. It makes me proud to be an American."

The parade brought Norman Halverson back to the days before he entered the war that led him to serve on a destroyer off Iwo Jima in 1945.

"It reminded me of when I was in boot camp, when we had a parade when we graduated," said Halverson, a farmer from Iowa.

After the ceremony, crowds gathered around the monument, which served as the model used to cast the bronze U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial that stands at Arlington, Va.

"Here are the veterans who fought for us," said Bernice Carlson, a Winter Texan from North Dakota. "I cry every time I come here because I love them so much. They gave their lives for us. For the young people, they gave them a future."

(Ed. Note: We thank Reporter FERNANDO DEL VALLE for this truly wonderful story and permission to run it.)



Cpl Harlon Block is the first Iwo Jima Marine, placing the flag at the base of the Monument.



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**Proceeds support Iwo Jima Monument and Museum.  
Y'all come visit us!**



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