

Clinton commemorates Iwo Jima anniversary

ARLINGTON, Va., — Joined by aging heroes of Iwo Jima, President Clinton honored soldiers bloodied and killed 50 years ago in the savage World War II battle. "The dimensions of their struggle still stagger us," he said Sunday.

The president, in keynote remarks commemorating the 50th anniversary of the pivotal battle, paid tribute to four Iwo Jima survivors by name and urged Americans to honor the memories of all soldiers who fought for the tiny Pacific island.

"To be worthy of that sacrifice, we must determine in this time to remain the strongest nation in the world so that our freedom is never again threatened," Clinton told a crowd of about 3,000.

With the monuments of Washington visible through a misty haze over the Potomac River, the president said, "And we must work to create a nation worthy of the generation that saved it for our freedom."

He spoke beneath a 78-foot bronze statue depicting the famous wartime photograph of U.S. soldiers hoisting a flag atop Mount Suribachi. "Hard men wept when they saw the flag fly,"

Clinton said.

The Associated Press photo by Joe Rosenthal symbolized the nation's resolve, Clinton said. "Our country saw the true definition of courage."

The Battle of Iwo Jima, one of the nation's bloodiest, gave the United States an air base for long-range bombing missions against mainland Japan.

In 36 days, U.S. casualties numbered 26,000, including 6,821 dead. For the Japanese, the toll was even more gruesome. Of the island's 20,000 defenders, only 1,083 survived. Thousands of the dead are still missing, their bones hidden in the volcanic island's intricate web of tunnels.

Introducing the president, Medal of Honor winner Col. William E. Barber shared his memories of "that 8-mile chunk of rock and volcanic ash." In a halting voice, he told dozens of fellow veterans in the crowd: "I am older now, as are you, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can still hear the noise of battle."

Clinton, who avoided wartime service in his youth, told another

generation's war stories.

He said Robert Dunlap, for 48 hours straight, directed attacks against enemy positions at Iwo Jima. The president marveled at Douglas Jacobson, who grabbed a bazooka built for two and destroyed 16 enemy positions by himself. Joseph McCarthy charged through an open field with a carbine and grenades, Clinton said, and Jack Lucas threw himself on two grenades to save his buddies.

With the four heroes seated in the front row, at the base of a muddy hill beside the monument, Clinton said, "For all Americans today — for those who still defend our liberty in uniform, and those who fight for decency and civility in our towns and communities — the men and women of Iwo Jima will forever stir our hearts, spur our conscience and summon us to action."

Before he placed a wreath at the monument with Dunlap, Jacobson, McCarthy and Lucas, the president's voice cracked as he concluded, "With our eyes closed, we can all still see the flag rising atop the hill."



News... in a Minute

Chechnya cease-fire expires

GOYTITY, Russia — The cease-fire in Chechnya expired as the sun went down Sunday, and the first hours of darkness were rent by explosions that promised a resumption of the war in all its ferocity.

Heavy explosions were heard every few minutes in this town about 10 miles south of the Chechen capital, Grozny, but it could not be determined which side was firing.

Earlier, as the five-day truce was in its final hours, Russian and Chechen rebel officials reportedly consulted by telephone to arrange another round of talks. But the Russian commander said his side "has exhausted existing possibilities to stop armed conflict."

Russia's peace proposals in the 10-week-old war have amounted to virtual demands for Chechen disarmament. Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev has been no more flexible, saying that he is "unconditionally" ready for peace — except for the condition that Russia withdraw its troops.

Judge won't drop charges

OKLAHOMA CITY — A federal judge has refused to dismiss charges against the only officer who faces a court-martial in the friendly fire attack that killed 26 people in two helicopters over Iraq.

Air Force Capt. Jim Wang is charged with three counts of dereliction of duty in the April 14 shootdown of two U.S. Army helicopters carrying an international delegation.

On Friday, military judge Lt. Col. Howard R. Altschwager at Tinker Air Force Base denied the request from Wang's lawyers to drop the charges.

Wang was in charge of officers aboard a radar plane who were monitoring the no-fly zone over northern Iraq when two fighter jets mistakenly shot down the helicopters.

He is accused of failing to warn the fighter pilots the helicopters were in the area and of not ensuring the helicopters properly identified themselves. He also is accused of not properly supervising the controllers under his command.

Wang's court-martial is scheduled to begin March 13. Wang has not yet entered a plea, but has maintained his innocence.

Student group wants Bobbit film

WASHINGTON — A student group at George Washington University has stirred controversy with plans to show an X-rated movie featuring John Wayne Bobbitt, who became a household name after his wife severed his penis and surgeons reattached it.

Members of the Program Board, the student organization that wants to show the film, say that presenting the hourlong "John Wayne Bobbitt ... Uncut" is a legitimate way to prompt an academic discussion on pornography.

But feminist, religious and conservative groups on campus contend that the screening would play to the worst impulses of a violent and sexist society. Program Board members argue that censorship has no place in academia.

Opponents plan to hold a demonstration and teach-in before the screening, slated for Feb. 27.

The film is a takeoff on the Bobbitts' story, with a "Lorena" character re-enacting the kitchen-knife incident. Bobbitt, playing himself, goes to the hospital for reattachment and is shown soon after the operation in a variety of sexual scenarios.

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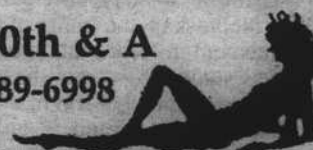
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