



**Newsletter for February 2020**

**Website: [MOWW VANDENBERG.ORG](http://MOWW.VANDENBERG.ORG)**

*Header courtesy Eric Wand*

### **MOWW Officers & Staff**

108 Indo Dr., Shell Beach, CA 93449  
2020 - 2021

#### **Chapter Commander**

Maj. James L. Murphy, USMC, (Ret)  
805-528-7565

#### **Sr. Vice Commander**

Lt(jg) Joseph Brocato USN (fmr)

#### **Jr Vice Commander**

LTC Lou Stout  
805-994-7051

#### **Adjutant**

Maj. James L. Murphy, USMC, (Ret)  
805-528-7565

#### **Treasurer**

Lt(jg) Joseph Brocato USN (fmr)

#### **Chaplain**

Maj. James L. Murphy, USMC, (Ret)  
805-528-7565

#### **Sergeant-at-Arms**

Maj. James L. Murphy  
805-528-7565

#### **Judge Advocate**

LTC Dan Dow USA (NG)  
805-703-3187

#### **Staff at Large-3 Positions**

LTC Angel Ortiz USA (NG)  
Capt David Brandmeyer USMC(fmr)  
CPT Richard Hathcock USA (fmr)

## **Commanders Message**

With the outstanding final tribute on January 28 to our veterans by LTJG Joe Brocato, he's given us a tough act to follow! A special tribute to Joe for all he's done over these past years in honoring our veterans! To my knowledge, I don't know of any event that came close to what he's done for our military!

Personally, I must admit I missed the first event at the Country Club as it was booked! So I lost a seat! But I made up with the Korean and Vietnam events. The final event was special as well, as Major Vic Freudenberger celebrated his 100th birthday on Friday, January 31! As I visited with Vic, I soon realized, while we never served together, we had many mutual Marine friends!

In mid-February I'm heading south to the Camp Pendleton area for another reunion of the Iwo Jima Association. It's always a great time, (I was not on Iwo in 1945! I was only 12 years old!). But I was on a tour: An old friend heads up the Military Historical Tours organization, so I went with his crowd. We first came to Guam. When we, as a group, were asked if anyone had been to Guam before, it seems I was the only one! My ship came into Agaña in 1956! From there we went to Saipan, Tinian, back to Guam then Iwo Jima. I carried a flag that had been flown over our capital, and proudly waved it on top of Mt. Suribachi! a lot of great memories and stories!

Our chapter is off to a fine start for the new year, and we have many great events planned for the months to come!

The “Final Call” Victory Tribute to our WWII veterans was held on January 28, 2020 at the San Luis Obispo Country Club hosted by the MOWW.

There were 22 WWII veterans in attendance and the event was covered by KSBY and The Tribune with supervisors Debbie Arnold, Lynn Compton, and John Peschong attending along with District Attorney Dan Dow. The Veterans gathered outside on the patio for a group shot just before having a very good lunch.

After lunch, LTJG Joe Brocato had each veteran introduced and they were presented with a nice personalized souvenir, a Certificate of Recognition from the County Board of Supervisors (signed by each), and Certificate of Recognition from the California Legislature Assembly signed by Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham.

Joe Brocato and his team were very well organized, the meeting flowed well and it was a very significant tribute to our WWII heroes.



### Adjutant's Comments:

A couple of administrative comments: If you are not a life (Perpetual) member, your local chapter dues are due the first of the year (January!) for \$15. We don't nag you but expect and hope all are honorable in this matter!

As mentioned, January meeting was top drawer! This month, February, our speaker will be supervisor Debbie Arnold. I've asked her to temper her political remarks and to zero in on “State of the County” remarks. In March former State Senator Sam Blakeslee will join us to share a number of important matters we should find interesting, including (perhaps) a discussion on the role of Vandenberg AFB and the new Space Force. (More on this subject in our October meeting.) We have some great stuff for the rest of the year! So stay posted!

## ***Sergeant of Arms Report.***

**February 1945:** Marines and sailors landed, after an extensive air and naval bombardment of the small island of Iwo Jima, came ashore from LVTs (tracked amphibious vehicles) and various landing craft. That battle lasted over 34 days, from February 19th until late March, 75 years ago! The island was strategically located on the route the B-29 bombers took to drop their bombs on Japan. Many of those planes never returned safely! While the preparations seemed effective, in fact, the Japanese now under the command of LtGen Kuribayashie had prepared the island defenses quite well. The island was/is riddled with caves and tunnels. UDT sailors had cased the beaches in advance of the landings. From a personal observation, when I visited the island, I came away with a much stronger appreciation of the difficulties our troops encountered trying to cross those beaches. The so-called “sands of Iwo Jima” is not sand as we know, but volcanic debris; the minute particles do not bind, so crossing by whatever means was extremely tough! It was impossible to dig a protective hole (“foxhole” as we know) as the black particles just kept falling back into the hole!

Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone had been awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on Guadalcanal. Now he was again facing the enemy! On that first day, he attacked a number of pillboxes and was killed by enemy shrapnel. In another situation, he would have been awarded a Medal of Honor, however, regulations now prohibited an individual from receiving two MOH! So he was awarded, posthumously, the Navy Cross!

The island is relatively small: Shaped, some would say, like a pork chop, with the infamous Mt Suribachi at the small, southern end of the 8-mile long terrain. It is still volcanic, and it is still rising out of the ocean. I have been told that the original landing beaches are about 20 or more yards farther from the water’s edge than 75 years ago! Before the island was secured, on March 4 “Dinah Might”, the first crippled B-29 made an emergency landing on the main (of 2) airfields. (A third airfield near the northern end of the island was under construction.) There were many more aircraft to be saved, coming to land on the small rock!

The actual landing beaches extended on both sides of the island, with 7 specific designated colored beaches. The forces quickly moved across the island to link up, then turned south toward the mountain as well as north to face the entrenched Japanese.

Everyone knows the story of the famous flag raising, as I have written about this event before. FYI, there have been serious discussions and technical studies regarding the names of those who raised the flag. Remember there were two flag raisings: the second, captured by photographer Joe Rosenthal is the one most noted, and is the source of the Marine Memorial at Arlington.

The battle was one of the most brutal in our history: The Japanese force of over 22,000 were virtually destroyed, very few taken prisoner. The American casualties were greater! Marines and sailors lost about 25,000 killed and wounded! It was reported almost 700 Americans gave their lives for every square mile!

Fleet Admiral Nimitz said, while the fighting still raged, “Among the Americans who served on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue.” Twenty-two Marines, four Navy corpsmen, and one LCI skipper were awarded the Medal of Honor, half were posthumous.

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### Chaplains notes:

In some church calendars this is the beginning of the longest seasons, so I’ll just add some other thoughts to carry us along!

As we age, we often find ourselves either giving or receiving special care. When giving, we may feel so frustrated and often angry! That person is so demanding! But not really.

That anger is really a human trait. Your care giving is an extension not of obligation, but of love. I’m reminded of a few words I came across the other day: (You need to consider these carefully!)

“What you are, now, we once were; what we are now, you shall be.” Life is fleeting, and death comes to all. I do not intend to be morbid, but we need to enjoy our times with our loved ones and appreciate the sunrises and the sunsets. *Enjoy the King Alfred Daffodils as they blossom this spring!*

**GEN Hoyt S. Vandenberg Chapter**

*Military Order of World Wars*

*Executive Committee*

108 Indio Drive

Shell Beach, CA 93440

Address correction requested

**Mark your calendar**

Feb.12th-MOWW EXCOM

Elks Club 9:30 am

Feb. 19th --MOWW Mtg.

Elks Club 11:30 am

**MOWW Preamble**

To cherish the memories and associations of the World Wars waged for humanity;

To inculcate and stimulate love of our country and flag;

To promote and further patriotic education in our nation;

Ever to maintain law and order, and to defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our national government and the Constitution of the United States;

To foster fraternal relations among all branches of the armed forces;

To promote the cultivation of military, naval, and air science and the adoption of a consistent and suitable policy of national security for the United states of America;

To acquire and preserve records of individual services;

To encourage and assist in the holding of commemorations and the establishment of memorials of the World Wars; and

To transmit all these ideals to posterity; under God and for our country we unite to establish . . .

The Military Order of the World Wars.