

# Veterans show pride at Iwo Jima anniversary ceremony

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By ROBERT STORAGE  
STAFF WRITER

NEW BRITAIN — Korean War veteran Nick Gandolfo traveled one hour from Canaan Wednesday to attend the ceremony commemorating the flag raising at Iwo Jima at the Iwo Jima Memorial. He did so to remember those who died, but also to send a message to others about war and veterans.

“They (the public) would not be where they are today if it weren’t for the vets of yesteryear,” said Gandolfo, 79. “They should be damn thankful for these guys who gave their lives so we can have the freedoms we have today.”

Gandolfo, who was joined by 20 others for the ten-minute tribute, paid for a brick at the memorial, near the Newington line.

While there were no World War II veterans at the commemoration and the crowd was relatively small, those who came said a big crowd was not the purpose of Wednesday’s remembrance.

“Just the fact that people acknowledged this day is important,” said Mark Adamski, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Iwo Jima Memorial and an organizer of Wednesday’s event. “Whether we get one person or 100, its’ a great turnout.”

As the crowd looked on, Adamski laid a wreath near the base of the memorial at 10:20 a.m., the time when six U.S. servicemen raised the American flag on Mt. Suribachi. In addition, Adamski blew an air horn three times, signifying the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima on Feb. 23, 1945.

The 35-day battle of Iwo Jima claimed 6,284 American lives. The death toll included 100 Connecticut residents.

Although Adamski, 41, an expert on World War II, did not serve in the military, several of his relatives did serve in World War II. He said he has a deep understanding of the sacrifices those men made for their country.

“We must never forget. We must continue to honor that generation,” said Adamski, who stayed until 3 p.m. to discuss the war and the many pieces of World War II memorabilia he has collected over the years. The memorabilia included books, Japanese helmets, sand from Mt. Suribachi, and many photos.

Said Marianne Mihalyo, secretary of the Iwo Jima Memorial Historical Foundation, “We are losing these (World War II) veterans. Many were just teens when they fought. If we don’t remind the public about their sacrifice, it will be lost forever.”



Samantha Burr | Staff Veteran

Mark Adamski blows a horn three times to symbolize the 66th anniversary of the flag raising at Iwo Jima. Adamski was joined by other veterans and community members at the Iwo Jima memorial in Newington on Wednesday morning. (2/23/11)

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