

## Village of Orland Park Media Relations

# NEWSRelease

Frederick T. Owens Village Hall

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### **Retired Orland Park History Teacher To Discuss Iwo Jima** *Orland Park's Greg Clark to Speak at Vets ' Commission Seminar*

ORLAND PARK, IL – The Village of Orland Park Veterans Commission continues its free lecture series on Monday, April 27 when Greg Clark presents “A Historian’s Perspective of Iwo Jima.” The 7:00 p.m. presentation will be held at the Orland Park Civic Center, 14750 South Ravinia Avenue.

The Battle of Iwo Jima was fought by the United States and the Empire of Japan in February and March, 1945 during the Pacific Campaign of World War II. The U.S. invasion, known as “Operation Detachment,” was aimed at capturing the airfields at Iwo Jima.

“When I came to the end of my teaching career in 2005, I wanted to do more, both as a Marine and as a teacher,” said Clark, who taught social studies for Orland School District 135 for more than 30 years.

“I retired the same year as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Iwo Jima so it was logical for me to study this battle. I became involved with a Marine history group and made the trip to Iwo Jima to keep the story alive,” he explained.

“We’re thrilled to have Greg Clark share his presentation with us,” said Orland Park Veterans Commission Secretary Gail Blummer, adding, “It’s important that we remember all that our veterans have been through and share their stories with future generations.”

“I served as an ad hoc member of the village’s Veterans Commission and remember vets like Bob Tesmond and Harold Lasch and want to keep this story alive for them,” Clark said.

Clark continues to research this battle, speaking to veterans who served in Iwo Jima as well as other historians who specialize in the Pacific Theater of WWII. He regularly shares his research with civic and veterans’ organizations. Iwo Jima veterans are scheduled to attend Clark’s Orland Park presentation and will be available for questions from the audience.

“I walk people across the Pacific, explaining why and how things happened, including vignettes of personal stories that I’ve learned,” Clark said, explaining his presentation.

Blummer added, “When people hear the words ‘Iwo Jima’, they remember the famous photograph of the five Marines and the U.S. Navy corpsman raising the United States flag atop Mount Suribachi.”

The photograph was taken by Joe Rosenthal on February 23, 1945. Of the six men in the picture, three did not survive the battle, Franklin Sousley, Harlon Block and Michael Strank. The three survivors, John Bradley, Rene Gagnon and Ira Hayes, became celebrities once the photo was published. The picture was later used to sculpt the USMC War Memorial located adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery.

Clark holds a Master’s Degree in Education Administration from Governors State University and received his Bachelor’s Degree in Education from Chicago Teachers’ College. The Bogan High School alum served in the United States Marine Corps Reserves from 1967 to 1973, VMF 611, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division Air Wing. Clark, who is married and has two adult children grew up on Chicago’s south side and has lived in Orland Park for 21 years.

Further information is available by calling Blummer at 708/403-6203.