

Press Releases

02-23-11 This Week In Orange County By Edward A. Diana

On February 23, 1945, photographer Joe Rosenthal snapped what would become one of the most widely recognized images from World War II, "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima". The photograph, which later became the basis for the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, depicts five United States Marines and a U.S. Navy corpsman raising the U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima. The heroic capture of Iwo Jima by the Marines 66 years ago helped to shorten the conflict in the Pacific.

Since 1988, the United States Marine Corps has maintained a unit at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh. The Marine Air Group 49 – Detachment Bravo is comprised of 650 active and reserve men and women who belong to one of two squadrons co-located at MAG 49 – the Marine Aviation Refuelers squadron and the Marine Aviation Logistics squadron. These men and women, many of whom are our friends and neighbors, play a critical role in supporting the unit's mission to augment the readiness of the active duty component of the Marines. We are fortunate to have these fine members of the USMC, as well as their counterparts at the 105th Air National Guard Unit at Stewart, as members of our community. Thank you all for your commitment to preserving the safety and well-being of our great nation. We're proud that you call Orange County home.

Not all of our men and women in uniform are able to serve close to home. Many, including those here at Stewart, are often called upon for missions overseas; and injured personnel may find themselves recuperating in military hospitals far from home. That's why it's especially important for each of us to take time to remember those who are called away from friends and loved ones.

On Valentine's Day, I had the opportunity to offer the opening remarks for the Valentine's for Veterans live broadcast from Chester Academy. In addition to Chester, Warwick, Walkkill, Port Jervis, Monroe-Woodbury, and Tuxedo schools, as well as Orange-Ulster BOCES participated in a video conference that broadcast musical performances from the schools live to a number of veterans' hospitals in New York State. It was also recorded and will be sent to our troops overseas. The students participating did a fantastic job!

As you begin your spring cleaning, keep Project CARD ONE in mind for any leftover holiday cards you may have. They will use the decorative fronts of used or new holiday cards to create a postcard to send to military personnel next holiday season. To donate cards, you can mail them to Project CARD ONE, MLO, Post Office Box 68, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925 or, drop them off at any County Department of Motor Vehicle Office in the box marked Project CARD ONE. This past season, Michelle Little-Oresto, Project CARD ONE founder, collected and distributed more than 5,000 cards to our troops abroad.

Lastly, if you have an old cell phone, don't throw it out – donate it. Cell Phone for Soldiers recycles old phones and raises funds to purchase calling cards so that our troops can call home. Collection boxes are located in County DMV offices. Thanks to the hard work of our local coordinators Frank "Uncle Buck" Pilleggi and Bob Martell from Monroe American Legion Post #488, more than 3,000 phones have been donated by Orange County residents.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness.

Edward A. Diana
County Executive