

*National Hotsup from Eldivado, Feb 27*  
*1948*

PRYOR: This is Don Pryor, off the coast of Iwo Jima. Beside me here on the flying bridge of the amphibious flagship are the two top commanders of the amphibious part of this vast operation -- Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner and Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, of the Marine Corps -- with their own report direct to you in America. Admiral Turner is commander of all amphibious forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas and the overall commander of this invasion; General Smith, commanding general of the Fleet Marine Force, is in overall command of the ground forces. Admiral Turner and General Smith -- what's your feeling about Iwo Jima now -- now that the operation is this far along? Admiral Turner?

TURNER: To me, the most impressive incident of the whole campaign so far was the raising of the flag on the top of Surabachi volcano Thursday morning by men of the 28th Marines. It affected me very deeply, -- and I'm sure that General Smith felt the same way about it.

SMITH: I certainly did. That was the most outstanding feature of the operation so far -- the assault and capture of that extinct volcano rising 556 feet, with sheer cliffs around the sides. Its capture was carried out in the face of the most tremendous difficulties, and I'm sure that only men imbued with the highest spirit of the offensive, love of country and esprit de corps could have taken that objective.

TURNER: For my part, General, I hope the American flag always flies there; that it's never allowed to come down. It should fly there, also, as a permanent memorial to the 28th Marines. And I think that Iwo Jima surely deserves a place -- probably a whole verse -- in the Marines' battle song. Don't you?

SMITH: Yes, I do. It certainly has been earned here. Maybe Mr. Pryor will write us one.

PRYOR: I'll certainly try. If a man could ever be lyrical, he surely could be about the Marines on Iwo Jima. Admiral Turner -- it's been said that this has been the toughest operation in the Pacific war. Would you say so now?

TURNER: Yes, in many ways. We knew that it would be difficult. But it has gone ahead just about as we expected. We have had losses and damage to our troops, ships, and boats. Losses are regrettable, of course, and we try to reduce them so far as possible. But losses must be expected if we

are to go forward -- and we are strong enough to accept them. The toughest part of the fighting in this campaign, however, has been on shore.

General Smith can tell you about that.

SMITH: Yes -- it's been difficult in every way on shore, as we knew it would be. The geographical situation itself is as difficult as any assaulting force has ever faced. There were only two beaches on which we could land, and we were restricted by weather to the eastern beach. There was no possibility of surprise. The area immediately behind the beach consisted of deep volcanic sand, which made it extremely hard to move supplies. From the shore line to the airfield, the terrain was exceedingly difficult, rising from sea level to 110 feet on the south and about 258 feet on the north. Both flanks were covered by numerous enemy pillboxes, block houses, artillery and mortar emplacements to the Nth degree. We had anticipated just such defense. The block houses were made of reinforced concrete, covered with two or three feet of sand which made them almost invisible. Even when seen, they were most difficult targets. Our plans were worked out long in advance in the most systematic manner, and our decisions were based on excellent photographs given to us by the air. But we finally realized that this probably would be the most difficult mission the Marine Corps had ever been assigned in its 168 years of service.

PRYOR: I believe the men themselves felt that it would be, General. Many of them told me so, even before D-Day. They've had no reason to change their minds since then, either, but I haven't seen a single one who had any other thought than to fight it out quickly and decisively.

TURNER: One thing I'd like to emphasize -- speaking of the men -- is the fact that a great many of them, especially in the ships of the amphibious force, are here taking part in their first combat. In spite of that, they have done an excellent job, and I am very much impressed by their eager gallantry. After this adventure they will be battle-hardened veterans. That same remark also applies to the Fifth Marine Division -- a new organization which went into battle for the first time here on Iwo Jima. It's true that the division was built around a hard core of veterans, and was thoroughly trained.

But any new fighting organization must prove itself under fire. The Fifth Marine Division has been tried this week under difficult conditions, and General Smith and I -- all of us in fact -- are tremendously proud of them. They have covered themselves with glory. The 28th Marines who captured Surabachi volcano are part of the Fifth Marine Division. And to the north, the rest of the division has been fighting well at the side of the veteran ~~Third~~ *Third and Fourth Marine Divisions*

PRYOR: General, -- how about our progress up there to the north?

SMITH: It's been slow, but sure. We knew that the battle would be hard. We had no delusions about a "set up." But we expect to take this island, and every man afloat and ashore is imbued with that spirit.

PRYOR: Admiral Turner -- it strikes me that this operation has been an excellent example of real cooperation and teamwork among the different fighting services.

TURNER: In my opinion, Mr. Pryor, no operation has ever shown a more close and sincere cooperation among all the services -- the Army, the Navy, the Marines, the Coast Guard and the Coast and Geodetic Survey, whether they operate in the air, on the surface or under the surface. All of these elements have played a vital parts in this offensive.

SMITH: In fact, I think we have one of the finest fighting teams in the world right here in the Fifth Amphibious ~~Group~~ *Force*, which includes men in all the services. Credit belongs to all of them as American fighting men -- not to any one branch of the service.

PRYOR: Admiral Turner -- what about the overall strategical picture? How important is Iwo Jima to us?

TURNER: It is most important. We have already denied its use to the enemy as a base for operations against us -- for bombing raids against our B-29 bases in the Marianas, for example. But we're on the offensive, and not the defensive. We plan to use Iwo Jima as you would a gun captured on the battlefield. We'll turn it against the enemy. From here, all types of our planes can reach the enemy's homeland, and it will not be long before they do. It is no longer one of Japan's strongest defensive outposts. From now on, Iwo Jima will become a base for our attack.

PRYOR: I'm afraid our time is getting short.....

SMITH: Before we end this broadcast, Mr. Pryor, I want to say for all of us, that to those who have made the supreme sacrifice here, we give their families our deepest sympathy. Both the living and the dead have done a magnificent job in the face of the most tremendous difficulties.

PRYOR: You have heard an interview with Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner and General Holland M. Smith, of the Marine Corps, direct from the flying bridge of Admiral Turner's amphibious flagship, off the coast of Iwo Jima. This is Don Pryor, representing the combined American radio networks. I return you to the United States.