

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



RICHARD VALLE
Vice President
Supervisor, District 2

February 21, 2017

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County Administration Building
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Board Members:

SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE NAMING OF A UNITED STATES NAVY SHIP IN HONOR OF JOSEPH (JOE) ROSENTHAL

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution endorsing and supporting the effort of the Joe Rosenthal Chapter of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association to encourage the United States Secretary of the Navy to name a Navy ship in honor of Joseph John Rosenthal.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Joe Rosenthal Chapter of the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association, formerly the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, is the Northern California chapter of a national organization of United States Marine Corps journalists. While most of the Chapter's current members belong to the Vietnam generation, they still have active members who fought on Iwo Jima and in the Korean War. They have launched a petition to encourage the United States Secretary of the Navy to name a ship for Joseph (Joe) John Rosenthal. The online petition can be viewed and signed at USSJoe.org.

Joe Rosenthal moved to San Francisco in 1932 and soon became a newspaper reporter and photographer. During World War II Joe served as a warrant officer in the Merchant Marine and as a photographer for the Associated Press.

In February 1945 Joe was with U.S. Marines and Navy Corpsmen during the fierce battle to take the island of Iwo Jima, taking arguably the most famous photograph in history. The photograph of six United States Marines raising the American flag atop Mt. Suribachi memorializes the nearly 7,000 Americans who died and the some 21,000 who were wounded in the battle at Iwo Jima. In the end, Iwo Jima was the single Pacific invasion with greater American casualties than the enemy.

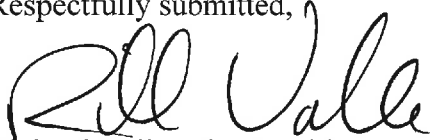
Just days later, what Joe referred to as “the picture” ran on the front pages of nearly every Sunday newspaper in America. Its composition so perfect, readers assumed it was posed. Some early viewers of the photograph commenting it “looked like a statue.” The photograph became the symbol of the Seventh War Bond Drive, raising billions of dollars for the bankrupt U.S. wartime Treasury. That spring Joe was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the first and only time the prize was awarded to a photo made in the same year.

The United States Secretary of the Navy has sole authority to name Navy ships. Ships have traditionally been named by "class." During WWII, for instance, U.S. battleships were named for U.S. states, and cruisers for cities. But these conventions change and naming themes are flexible. While the Secretary is guided by tradition, input from Congress and from the Public also affect his decisions.

FINANCING:

There are no additional net county costs associated with this action.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Valle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Valle, Vice President
Supervisor, Second District

RESOLUTION NO. 2017- 49

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Resolution Supporting the Naming of a United States Navy Ship in Honor of Joseph “Joe”
Rosenthal**

WHEREAS, February 2017 marks the 72nd anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, fought February 19 to March 26, 1945; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, San Francisco photographer Joseph “Joe” Rosenthal served as a warrant officer in the Merchant Marines; and

WHEREAS, Joe Rosenthal shared courage under fire with soldiers and Marines, flying on a Navy dive-bombing mission, sailing aboard many U.S. Navy ships, making four amphibious landings, and climbing Mt. Suribachi, on February 23, 1945, during the fierce battle for Iwo Jima; and

WHEREAS, Iwo Jima, a remote, barren, 8.5 square mile, pork chop shaped island of volcanic ash and rock, unmarked on many maps, its singular topographic distinction a volcanic hump of a mountain named Suribachi-yama, a place nobody knew, would become a place nobody would forget; and

WHEREAS, February 23, 1945 found United States Marines, Navy Corpsmen, and fire direction teams on Iwo Jima in a fight to the death with its Japanese defenders; and

WHEREAS, since landing four days earlier, Americans were dying in terrible numbers, in the first days of the battle a Marine or Navy Corpsman was killed or wounded every 30 seconds; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Marine Corps invasion casualties on Iwo Jima matched Normandy and Gettysburg, days of fighting against a fierce enemy would yield only yards of advance; and

WHEREAS, Old Glory raised on Mt. Suribachi marked Victory of the moment and promised ultimate Victory over the foe in the Pacific and worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the photo memorializes the nearly 7,000 Americans who died and the some 21,000 who were wounded in the battle at Iwo Jima, the only Pacific battle in which U.S. casualties were greater than Japanese casualties, though 21,000 Japanese died and only some 1,200 survived; and

WHEREAS, Joe Rosenthal’s dramatic photograph became arguably the most recognized and reproduced in history; and

WHEREAS, the photo of six U.S. Marines working together demonstrates the spirit of teamwork that makes America exceptional; and

WHEREAS, Joe Rosenthal was always a modest man, shrugging off his iconic picture saying, "What difference does it make who took the picture? What's important is that the Marines took Iwo Jima;" and

WHEREAS, Joe Rosenthal's photograph has endured for more than seven decades as a symbol of America's sense of mission at the mid-20th century; and

WHEREAS, this photograph measurably lifted the morale of an American population frustrated in 1945 by the continuing struggle and human cost of World War II, capturing the heart and soul of Americans on the home front and giving meaning to the sacrifices Americans experienced in the world's greatest conflict; and

WHEREAS, by February 1945 it was clear that the war was coming to an end in Europe; and

WHEREAS, Pacific battles, however, continued to be ferocious; America's homefront patience wavered, frustrated by the notion that the island war would drag on and with the expectation that the invasion of Fortress Japan promised casualties to challenge the imagination; and

WHEREAS, the photograph became the symbol of the Seventh War Bond Drive, raising billions of dollars for the bankrupt U.S. wartime Treasury; and

WHEREAS, the photograph was reprinted countless times, its simple unmistakable message was repeated over and over: Victory; Victory now; Ultimate Victory to come; American warriors getting the job done; the battle was not over, it would continue another month, the war would last some six more months, but the photo promised, Victory was assured; and

WHEREAS, in the Spring of 1945 Joe Rosenthal was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the first and only time the prize was awarded to a photo made in the same year; and

WHEREAS, the flag itself, tattered after a month's exposure to Suribachi's constant Pacific winds, was raised over the U.S. Capitol; and

WHEREAS, the bronze reproduction of Joe Rosenthal's photo stands silently in Arlington, Virginia, the snap of its wind driven flag a reminder of true heroism by those who served and by those too young to recall a distant war's sound of battle and the desperate cry, "Corpsman, Corpsman!"; and

WHEREAS, Joe Rosenthal's photograph is a lasting memorial to those who faced the ultimate sacrifice in defending America; and

WHEREAS, many decades later Joe Rosenthal's photograph remains an enduring symbol of the American experience; and

WHEREAS, the Joe Rosenthal Chapter of the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association, formerly the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, launched a petition to encourage the United States Secretary of the Navy to name a ship for Joe Rosenthal; and

WHEREAS, the United States Secretary of the Navy has sole authority to name Navy vessels;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that this Board of Supervisors, County of Alameda, State of California, does hereby endorse and support the effort of the Joe Rosenthal Chapter of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association to encourage the United States Secretary of the Navy to name a Navy ship in honor of Joseph Rosenthal.

THE FOREGOING WAS PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors this 21st day of February, 2017, to by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Carson, Haggerty, Miley, Valle & President Chan

NOES: None

EXCUSED: None



Wilma Chan, President
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: RBanley, Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DONNA ZIEGLER, COUNTY COUNSEL

By: 