



Uncommon Valor - Common Virtue: The Franklin R. Sousley Story

Donald R. Curtis

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On February 19th, 1945, after four days of heavy fighting on the tiny island of Iwo Jima, the Marines finally reached the base of Mt. Suribachi. The goal was to take the volcanic cone some 600 feet tall towering over the island. First to reach the summit was "Fox" Company. They erected an American flag to the thrill and excitement of Marines on the beach and coming ashore. Colonel Chandles Johnson thought it best to put up a larger flag where everyone could see it. A runner was sent to a ship off shore and a larger flag was retrieved. As the larger flag was sent up the mountain, Joe Rosenthal went up with the second flag, carried by a Marine. As the flag went up and the first came down, a split second click of his camera, caught the flag raising which became one of the most famous photographs in U.S. history. It also caused one of the biggest controversies. This writing is about one certain young man, Franklin R. Sousley, of Fleming County, Kentucky, who after battling his way up Mt. Suribachi, took part in the second flag raising and became a hometown hero as well as one from Kentucky, by raising and displaying "Old Glory" over Japanese territory, along with five other comrades. Discover some of his early life, growing into a fine young man, becoming a Marine and ending up on the island of Iwo Jima, where he lost his life for freedom, not only for Americans, but the entire world, and became part of what has long been said as "our greatest generation."

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