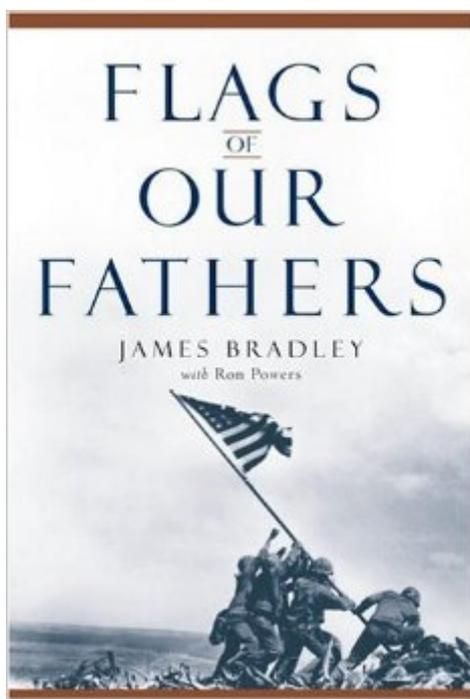


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# Flags Of Our Fathers



## Synopsis

In this unforgettable chronicle of perhaps the most famous moment in American military history, James Bradley has captured the glory, the triumph, the heartbreak, and the legacy of the six men who raised the flag at Iwo Jima. Here is the true story behind the immortal photograph that has come to symbolize the courage and indomitable will of America. In February 1945, American Marines plunged into the surf at Iwo Jima—and into history. Through a hail of machine-gun and mortar fire that left the beaches strewn with comrades, they battled to the island's highest peak. And after climbing through a landscape of hell itself, they raised a flag. Now the son of one of the flagraisers has written a powerful account of six very different young men who came together in a moment that will live forever. To his family, John Bradley never spoke of the photograph or the war. But after his death at age seventy, his family discovered closed boxes of letters and photos. In *Flags of Our Fathers*, James Bradley draws on those documents to retrace the lives of his father and the men of Easy Company. Following these men's paths to Iwo Jima, James Bradley has written a classic story of the heroic battle for the Pacific's most crucial island—an island riddled with Japanese tunnels and 22,000 fanatic defenders who would fight to the last man. But perhaps the most interesting part of the story is what happened after the victory. The men in the photo—three were killed during the battle—were proclaimed heroes and flown home, to become reluctant symbols. For two of them, the adulation was shattering. Only James Bradley's father truly survived, displaying no copy of the famous photograph in his home, telling his son only: "The real heroes of Iwo Jima were the guys who didn't come back." Few books ever have captured the complexity and furor of war and its aftermath as well as *Flags of Our Fathers*. A penetrating, epic look at a generation at war, this is history told with keen insight, enormous honesty, and the passion of a son paying homage to his father. It is the story of the difference between truth and myth, the meaning of being a hero, and the essence of the human experience of war.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS is a brilliant work for so many reasons: it pays homage to the six men who raised the flag on Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima during WWII; it is a tribute to a father who felt strongly that the real heroes at Iwo were the boys who didn't come back; it is a testimonial to the USMC and its fighting men; it portrays a graphic and at times unimaginable description of the horrors of war; and, it depicts not only the indignities that we humans can suffer upon one another, but also the moments when common men (indeed, boys) are moved to perform acts of uncommon valor and courage. When reading this book, you will feel pride, grief, anger, sadness, and dismay. Its words will make you laugh, cry, mourn, and think hard. FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS is a good book---no, a great book---about a moment in our history and the ordinary men who performed extraordinary deeds and left their mark upon the annals of war. Read it...for the sake of the six flagraisers, the families left behind in all wars, and the whole human race.

James Bradley's tale of the six boys who raised the Old Glory over the island of Iwo Jima (one of whom was his own dad) is a classic of war literature. It is a father-son story. It is a war story. It is a story of patriotism and sacrifice. But ultimately it is the story about how ordinary people can rise to extraordinary heights in fantastically dangerous situations. Inspired and inspirational, this book is must-reading for anyone even remotely interested in World War II, and in the sacrifices that certain Americans made in order to win it. This Memorial Day, buy a copy for everyone you know!

Born in 1974, I can hardly claim to have experienced the terror and patriotism that surrounded WWII. By all accounts, the picture of the flag raising on Mount Suribachi has always existed for me. In every history book through school, the six men hoisting the American flag on a makeshift pole atop this sawed-off "mountain" was printed as the epitome of American valor. Little was mentioned about the people or the event that surrounded this monumental photograph. Now, thankfully, we know. This book is an absolute must-read. At once a biography of each of these six brave men, a history book, a war novel, and a tale of struggle, this book should find its way onto the bookshelf of

every American. The lives of these men before, during, and after the battle of Iwo Jima is enough to fill you with great sadness and immense patriotic pride simultaneously. This book is as relevant today as it could have been had it been published 55 years ago. While it is quite usual to hear words like honor, courage, and commitment strewn about by talking heads that pervade our society and media, it is rare to see these demonstrated by actual human beings. The stories of these men will show that that even under great strain the human spirit can thrive, and that occasionally our heroes can be taken at face value. However, as Bradley points out, these men were not heroes for raising that flag on Mount Suribachi. They, like every other American boy who set foot on foreign soil for God and country half a century ago, were heroes for the simple act of being there and doing the best they could. Buy this book.

Stephen Ambrose said it himself on the back of this book, "The best battle book I ever read. These stories, from the time the six men who raised the flag at Iwo Jima enlisted, their training, and the landing and subsequent struggle, fill me with awe." This is a dramatic story of Iwo Jima; I absorbed every word of every page with intensity. It brought me to tears and, at times, made me laugh. I felt I was crawling with the Marines yard by yard as they moved across the small island under intense fire from the Japanese. The pictures James Bradley produce will stay in my mind for a long time, at least until I read the book again. I keep seeing his father, Doc, administering first aid to a wounded Marine. Knowing the wounded soldier could quickly bleed to death, Doc covered the soldier with his own body as he administered first aid while bullets exploded around him. Doc won the Navy Cross for this heroic action. The book doesn't just cover the fighting on the island, but follows the survivors of the six flagraisers back to the states. Their heroic welcome home involved them as part of a push to sell war bonds. James Bradley finally brings to end myths of the raising of the flag, e.g. that it was staged and that it was at the end of the fight for Iwo Jima. From the very beginning of the book I was thankful for his father and the others that fought for our freedom on that small island in the Pacific. I wish I could thank all the veterans for their sacrifices made on Iwo Jima. Since I can't, I can thank James Bradley for bringing the story of his father and the other five flagraisers into my life. You'll be thankful, too. Bradley should receive a Pulitzer Prize for this incredible book.

No, this isn't John Wayne and "Sands of Iwo Jima". This is a story of American youth and a time of American innocence. Who were these six young, skinny kids in this photograph? A photograph that has become an icon of our times. Three of them would never know what impact this photo and their actions had on a country. Three others would know only too well. I sincerely thank James Bradley for

taking on this very personal and very emotional subject. His father, PM2C John Bradley, USN must have been made of greater stuff than most folks. His son's book is one of the most fitting tributes to a father's memory I could ever imagine. My most heartfelt best wishes go out to James, his mother and all the Bradley's.

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