

December 1, 2006

Seasons Greetings,

If it has remained intact, the enclosed poster is from the workplace; but, since seeing this mosaic of the symbolic picture taken by the late Joe Rosenthal, I am reminded of those of you whom have served our country and, on occasion, have shared that experience. You probably know the story of this picture, and of the one who took it; yet, on the possibility of another heroic account (and reason to always honor those of you who served), the following:

He took the picture on the fifth day of the furious 36-day battle that left 6,621 American dead and 19,217 wounded. All but 1,083 of the 22,000 dug-in Japanese defenders were killed before the island was secured. It was of that battle -- one of the bloodiest in Marine Corps history -- that Adm. Chester Nimitz, World War II commander of the Pacific fleet, said: "Among the Americans who served on Iwo Island, uncommon valor was a common virtue." ...

The photo was an instant classic and is the best-known combat photo of World War II, and perhaps the most famous photograph ever taken. The image is still regarded as a symbol of the fighting spirit of the Marine Corps. Even more than half a century later, Rosenthal's picture retains its emotional power as a work of art as well as a patriotic icon. It has been reproduced on postage stamps, calendars, newspapers, magazines and countless posters. The picture was used as an inspirational symbol for a War Bond drive in 1945 that raised \$26.3 billion.

The photo was so dramatic and perfectly composed that some believed Rosenthal must have posed the figures. "No," Rosenthal told a friend in recent years. "It was not posed. I gave no signal and didn't set it up. I just got every break a photographer could have wished for. If I set it up I probably would have ruined the shot. I was lucky."

To read more, go to:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/08/21/MNGEJKM9VH1.DTL>

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