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JANUARY 2012
www.sokolbaltimore.org

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UNIT MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2012

Meeting at 6:30 pm

St. Margaret's
Episcopal Church
1834 E. Joppa Road



Curtis Bay Sokol Hall 1960's

Courtesy of Ken Carter

UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS:

Slavic American Sokol -

For information about activities contact their web Site: www.SlavicAmericanSokol.org. Email is SlavicAmericanSokol@gmail.com or call (571) 249-1727.

CSHA Language School Spring Semester Begins January 21, 2012. For more information call Lois Hybl at 410-428-6012.

Sunday, January 22, 2012 – CSHA Quarterly Meeting, 3:00 pm. See last page for details.

Monday, January 23, 2012 – Sokol Baltimore Unit Meeting, 6:30pm @ St. Margaret's Episcopal Church.

Happy January Birthday!

January 1st – Rose Marie Krajca
January 2nd – Joseph Vrzalik
January 3rd – Patricia Watkins
January 9th – Anton 'Tony' Primus
January 12th – Slavoj Vanicky
January 17th – Marie Pokorny
January 22nd – Evelyn Manning

Donations to Sokol Baltimore

Christopher Nenadal in memory of Marie and Frank Vitak

Terry Harrison in memory of Libbie and Henry Vrzalik

In memory of Ruth and Bohus 'Bo' Bata:

Kristen Cahlander	Lois and Albert Hybl
Leilani Sain	Jerry Valcik
Ann & Frank Huber	Eastern District

Remember to pay your dues by January 31, 2012
Send your check payable to "Sokol Baltimore" to:
Sokol Baltimore
PO Box 448
Perry Hall, MD 21128

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SOKOL BALTIMORE, INC.
Unit Meeting Minutes Dec. 19, 2011

Welcome: Christmas Meeting/Celebration held at Pres. Rokos' home.

Announcements:

A moment of respect for the passing of the prior President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel.

Passing of Bro. Donald Otenasek – Mary Petr-Miles, nee Otenasek and Father Ron Zoubek attended the December meeting to read the trust and present checks to Sokol Baltimore. Money was left to Sokol Baltimore as well as 6 other organizations. \$50,000 was left for maintenance, \$600 for pallbearer services by members, \$128,671.06 from residual split between 6 orgs and 2 relatives. Large framed photo of Bro. Otenasek to be shipped to American Sokol in Chicago.



Brother Donald Otenasek

Treasurer's Report:

As of Oct 1, balance was \$3,673.86. No deposits made and expenses included phone, payroll, Gerstung/Coppermine Field House rental, loan payment, check re-orders. Balance as of Nov. 1, \$1,606.71. Minimal activity, one deposit of \$500 and \$250 facility rental expense for Coppermine. Balance as of Dec. 1, \$1,856.71
Motion to approve-passed.

Previous meeting- in anticipation of donation, Pres, Michael Rokos created a resolution to open an account at Slavie. He will pursue a deposit from monies received.

Property taxes at the Honeygo Blvd. property to be paid by the buyer. Unclear where exactly we are in the sale process

Vision- Bro. Rick Lund has developed a draft of a vision statement for the Sokol Baltimore organization. Has asked for contributions from other members in January and will move forward with development/revision

Bro. Joseph Ehrenberger- still searching for facility. Following all potential leads and coordinating use of other facilities for adult workouts. Although proceeds will not be going to Sokol, many of the adult participants will begin working out on Saturdays (2-4pm) at Emilia's in Columbia after the New Year. Still identifying best course of action for equipment being stored. Motion to hire movers to transfer equipment to rental facility. Sis. Kristen Cahlander is exploring rental possibilities. Motion passed to consolidate inventory from container.

New member- Christopher James Nenadal was voted on and approved.

Members- Bros. Ehrenberger, Kool, & Rokos and Sis. Johnston may attend the Administrative Conference in Illinois on Jan. 14 & 15, 2012.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 23, 2012 at St. Margaret's Church, 6:30pm

Submitted by Recording Secretary,
Sis. Angela Bernstein

The Sokoletter is published monthly by Sokol Baltimore Inc. All articles, news and contributions can be forwarded to Ann or Frank Huber, 514 Sellrus Court, Fallston, MD 21047-2421, (410) 877-0534. Email: frankh1228@aol.com or ann12141@aol.com. Material to be published is due by the 20th of the preceding month. Please also advise of address changes, etc. to ensure continued delivery. Annual subscription is \$15.00 for all non-members. Send check, payable to "Sokol Baltimore" to P.O. Box 448, Perry Hall, MD 21128.

Completion of Mike Strank Story

In an earlier newsletter I wrote: **Mike Strank** – “I read a wonderful book “**Flags of our Fathers**” by James Bradley, the son of Doc Bradley, who is one of the flag raisers on Suribachi Mountain on Iwo Jima. There are six boys who are on the famous photo of the flag on Iwo Jima. Their names are: Ira Hayes, Franklin Sousley, John Bradley, Harlon Block, Mike Strank and Rene Gagnon. Only two of the boys walked off Iwo Jima. Three were killed and John Bradley was wounded and carried off the island. Out of every 3 marines who landed 2 were killed. The book covers the life and stories of many of the soldiers who fought in the Pacific. I am copying James Bradley’s story about Mike Strank. In some articles Mike Strank is referred to as being Czech because he was born 1919 in Czechoslovakia. Actually he was born in Jarabenia, which is located in the Slovakia region.

Mike Strank of Franklin Borough, Pennsylvania

[This is taken from: Bradley, J. & Powers, R. (2000). Flags of Our Fathers. New York: Bantam Books.]

“He was the enigma: the immigrant who became the ultimate fighting Yank; the cerebral little boy from the tough mill town who grew up to be the protosergeant: the physical intimidator who turned out to be the tough shepherd of his flock. The old man of his company, who would not live to see twenty-five. Of all the six, I find him the most complex, the most elusive study in contrasts. That is, until I study the small part of him that is visible in the photograph: his right hand. Mike Strank’s right hand tells me everything I need to know.

He is behind and to the left of Franklin. His right shoulder is pressed against Franklin’s left. Their torsos are conjoined; their arms are reaching upward. Each boy has his left hand on the flagpole, and Franklin has his right hand on it as well. But the key to the image, at least for me, is Mike’s right hand closing on Franklin’s wrist. It is an image of almost unbearable delicacy and gentleness. That is Mike: the protector, the veteran Marine in the group, helping the tyro. When that shutter clicked on Suribachi, it caught Sergeant Mike in an absolutely characteristic moment. He was reaching out to give support to a younger boy in the critical chain of action.

Among the flagraisers, Mike is the one larger-than-life hero. When old comrades talk to me about Mike they become young men again. “A Marine’s Marine is the phrase they all get to sooner or later. They speak of the strapping man. Yet violence is not the key to Mike Strank: it is not what men valued about him. What they valued—what makes their spines stiffen in admiration fifty years after the battle—was his leadership. That and his quality of love.

“He was the finest man I ever knew,” said one platoon-mate who went on to become a national business leader. “The best of the best,” said one who went up Suribachi with him. “The kind of Marine you read about, the kind they make movies about,” said another.

A Marine’s Marine. But not because of his ferocity in combat—although he was a cool and deadly fighter. Not because he screamed, “Follow me and we’ll kill a lot of Nips!” or ranted about “dying for your country.” Mike Strank earned respect by emphasizing the well-being of his young charges at least to the extent possible in the face of torrential gunfire.

“Follow me,” Sergeant Mike used to tell the boys in his squad, “and I’ll try to bring all of you back safely to your mothers. Listen to me, and follow my orders, and I’ll do my best to bring you home.”

He was born Mychal Strenk on November 10, 1919, in Jarabenia, Czechoslovakia. A friend of the family, Ann Bosophy, who was born in the same small farm village, recalled that Vasil and Martha Strenk subsisted in a one-room house with a dirt floor, along with Vasil’s parents and grandparents.

The following year Vasil emigrated to America and changed his last name to Strank. Sponsored by an uncle, Alex Yarina, he passed through Ellis Island and made his way to the Pennsylvania mining and steel-working town of Franklin Borough, on the Conemaugh River sixty-five miles east of Pittsburgh and two miles east of Johnstown.

Franklin Borough, chartered in 1868, was at its peak population in 1920: 2,632 people. A complex built in 1898 by the Cambria Iron Company and soon to be taken over by Bethlehem Steel offered plenty of hard work for gritty, industrious immigrants: twenty-two open-hearth furnaces, two mills for rolling sheared plates, a universal plate mill, and a continuous bar mill. Three years later Bethlehem would add business offices, five blast furnaces, a billet mill, a slab mill, a powerhouse, boilers, a chemical laboratory, a sintering plant (in which iron could be heated into a steely mass without melting), and a steel car department.

At their height, the Bethlehem mills and mines around Franklin Borough employed more than 18,000 workers. They clustered in soot-caked towns and villages throughout Cambria County and along the western slope of the Alleghenies. Franklin Borough became a safe haven for East Central European immigrants and their offspring; by the early 1930's they would form a majority in the little town, a village-within-a-village, really. They would provide three of the town's six civil officers and half the members of the Franklin Fire Department.

Vasil worked the mines for three years before he could afford to send for Martha and the baby. They followed him to America in early 1922. Three-year-old Mychal passed innocently under the portals of Lady Liberty, the most recognizable image of America until he and his comrades supplanted it twenty-three years later.

By the end of that year Mychal had a brother, John. Pete would follow in 1925, with sister Mary still eight years in the future.

The family lived in a two-room rental apartment inside the Slavic enclave. The rooms were kitchen and a bedroom. To Martha especially, this was luxury: a castle, she said, compared with what they had endured back in Jarabenia. Mike, John and Pete shared one bed; their parents slept close by in the other. Vasil trudged off to the mine at three P.M. every day in his lamp-hat and fatigues, carrying a pail that had a thermos of water in the bottom and his lunch on top. He wore the same clothes all year round, returning home black with coal dust from head to toe. But proud. This was progress!

Franklin Borough offered the Strank family a symbolic vision of America Here was a fiery, noisy landscape of New World mechanization. The whole town could see the vast skeletal structures of the mills. Many families lived virtually next door. The mines, cut into the banks of the hills, completed the enveloping industrial view. Night never came to the mill town, the blast furnaces with their open hearths blazed away twenty-four hours a day.

The day, on the other hand, could seem like a perpetual twilight. The coal-dust haze from the mines formed a thick presence in the sky, blotting out the sun. The first duty for any Franklin family upon waking was to sweep the front and back porches free of the soot that had fallen overnight like black snow. A woman who grew up there remembered walking through "an inch of crunch" on her way to school every day.

Life in the town reflected this pounding, gritty pace of constant sweat and production. When the Stranks arrived, Franklin boasted fourteen beer gardens, but no church, and no doctor. Yet the Eastern Europeans who toiled there did not see any of this as deprivation. For them, it was a new chance in a new and vigorous land; a chance to rise, or at least for their children to rise. They preserved their culture and their religious values in the two-room rented dwellings where they lived under the steel mills' glare, each little apartment building a link in the improvised chain of new community.

Without realizing it, Vasil Strank might have begun the molding of his eldest son into a Marine's Marine right in the bosom of his tiny household.

Mychal—now renamed Mike—shared a bed with his brothers John and Pete. Returning from his late shift at the mine as he did, at about one in the morning, Vasil seldom saw his three little boys awake—they would leave for school while he was still sleeping, and he would be gone to begin his shift by the time they returned. This routine could not have been easy for Vasil. "His family was really the boys," his son John recalled.

And Vasil abided by a strict Old World value system. Discipline in the family was paramount. When one of the boys had misbehaved, Martha would report it to Vasil upon his return home at night, and he would wake up a few hours later, along with the boys, to administer punishment.

Vasil insisted on a special rule for this punishment: No matter which boy had committed the offense, all three would be disciplined equally. In this way, Vasil thought, he could transfer the burden of discipline from himself to the boys; make them see that they had a shared interest in the good behavior of each.

Vasil probably did not know that he had instituted one of the fundamental principles of military training; in particular, Marine training. Roughly fifty percent of procedure in a Marine basic-training program is about disconnecting the young American boy from his concept of himself as a unique individual, a lone operator. He is remolded into an integer in a team. Shared responsibility—an abiding sense of the unit—is essential to survival in combat. Thus, if a recruit should faint from exhaustion during a forced march, the rest of his unit is trained to run in circles around his body until he comes to. Equal discipline.

As the eldest of the three brothers, and the brightest—his intellectual skills would soon blaze brilliantly to the surface—Mike not only grasped the concept of teamwork and equal responsibility, he became a liaison between his father and his two younger siblings,

(Continued on page 7)

December 19, 2011 Meeting and Christmas Party



Checks received from the Donald Otenasek Trust. Pictured from left: Mary Petr-Miles, nee Otenasek, Brother Will Kool, Sister Anci Cervin Huber, President Michael Rokos, Father Ron Zoubek.



Some of the goodies!!!

Joseph Ehrenberger, Director of Education, Sokol Baltimore

Notes on Stretching Scientifically: A Guide to Flexibility Training By Thomas Kurz, Stadion Publishing, 2003

PART 1 **Introduction**

Thomas Kurz studied at the University School of Physical Education in Warsaw. With the breakup of the Eastern Block the advanced training methods they used to dominate international sports became known in the West. He has written and translated several books on sports training.

Kurz's method is summed up in a single paragraph: Tense your muscles prior to relaxing and stretching them, and tense them every time you want to increase your range of motion during a stretch. As your strength in stretched positions increases, so does your range of motion. A key to his method is using isometric (tensing) contractions of muscles in a stretch.

After you have acquired your targeted range of motion, you can reduce the amount of work dedicated to stretching. Much less work is needed to maintain flexibility than to develop it.

Types of Flexibility

- Dynamic Active (*flexibility in motion using only the muscles of the moving body part. A split leap or throwing your arms rearward overhead for a back handspring is an example*).
- Dynamic Passive (*flexibility in motion with external assistance. Using weights to increase range at the limits of motion is an example*).
- Static Active (*flexibility of moving a body part into a held position. A scale is an example*).
- Static Passive (*flexibility in a held position with external assistance. A Y-Scale is an example*).

Injury Prevention and Stretching

- Balancing the flexibility of all the muscles in a joint and improving the strength and endurance of the weaker muscles are the easiest measures for preventing injuries.
- Static stretching or any strenuous stretching right before exercising is useless or even harmful. It does not raise muscle temperature, or increase blood flow, or warm up joints. There is no scientific evidence that static stretching reduces the risk of injury. Do it after other exercises.
- Wait several hours after very hard resistance training before stretching: doing it right afterwards can compound the muscle damage. Training loads that are too great without enough rest cause chronic fatigue and increase the likelihood of injury.
- The wrong sequence of efforts within a workout, or within a weekly cycle of workouts can double your recovery time. Within a workout; start with a 30 minute warm up. First do a cardiovascular warm up, then 10 minutes of dynamic stretching, then specific warm up with movements resembling the subject of the workout. After the main workout, the cool down period can involve static passive stretches and isometric stretches. The last part of the cool down should involve walking or marching to help the neural regulation return to normal. In a weekly schedule-work on speed or technique before strength, work on strength before working on endurance. Violating this principle leads to chronic fatigue, overtraining, or injuries.

Children and Flexibility Training

- Preschool children do not need flexibility exercises; their normal play will put their joints through the full range of motion.
- From ages 6-10 mobility of the shoulder and hip joints is reduced. Dynamic stretching (arm raises and rotations, leg raises in all directions) is useful. Striving to increase flexibility of the spine, as well as repetitive bending and twisting may result in lifelong back problems.
- From ages 10-13 you can intensify flexibility training.
- From ages 13-15, during the growth spurt, all bones, ligaments, and muscles are weakened. Muscles and tendons do not elongate as quickly as bones. Avoid stressing the spine by too many repetitions of bends and twists.
- Avoid static stretching of all kinds (passive, active, isometric) in children's training. It is hard for children to stay still, relax, and concentrate properly on feedback from their muscles.
- Do not do isometric or strenuous relaxed stretches before the second stage of adolescence (15-19).

The Elderly and Flexibility Training

- Strength training alone with resistance permitting 6-10 repetitions can increase flexibility.
- Even people in their 90s can increase muscle mass and strength.

NEXT: Part 2 – Dynamic Stretching

an explainer of his father's rules and wishes to Pete and John. In short, a sergeant.

Mike Strank resembled his mother. . . . Mike absorbed his mother's fervent Catholic faith. Before bed each night, he and his two brothers would kneel on the floor, before a vivid painting of The Last Supper, and say their evening prayers in Slovak. They looked out for one another. They took to making sure they wore the same color shirt to school each day. Like uniforms.

Slowly, the Strank family gained a foothold. While Vasil labored, and Martha raised geese on the hill behind the apartment, plucking the feathers to make pillows, the boys attended school, where they picked up the new American language. Schools were good around Franklin Borough and Johnstown; Bethlehem Steel, a benevolent despot, paid for good building and teachers and even an indoor swimming pool. But no one could completely shield the immigrant children from nativist bigotry. Ann Bosophy, the Stranks' fellow immigrant from Jarabenia, recalls cringing on the schoolroom floor after being struck by her first-grade teacher. Her sin was unthinkingly slipping into the Slovak tongue.

Mike never made that mistake. He did not know English when he began first grade; by the end of the year he was so proficient in it that he skipped the second. He even learned to joke around in the new tongue. He took up the French horn and learned it. Quickly. It was amazing, his relatives said: The boy never forgot anything. He could open the evening newspaper, read a page of it, and the next morning tell you exactly what all the articles said. A photographic memory.

He was shy around girls, Ann Stank, Pete's wife, recalled. Not outgoing. You would only notice him if you knew him. But then, not many of the boys in that town were at ease with girls, or vice versa. Men, he liked. Men, he understood. And men liked and understood Mike Strank.

His shyness had nothing to do with timidity. He saved his brother John's life in the mines once. It happened in 1933, when Mike was fifteen and John was eleven. Coal miners' children were allowed to go inside the tunnels sometimes, during breaks, and collect random shards of coal to fuel their families' stoves. One day, Mike and John were walking along in the darkness, feeling for lumps of coal. John, trailing his big brother, was idly banging his coal shovel against the wall. On one bang the shovel made contact with an exposed high-power wire. John screamed, but could not let go; the electricity fused his hand to the shovel. Mike spun and hurled his body against the little boy like a football lineman throwing a block, knocking him free. John fell to the ground screaming in terror, but safe from the deadly current.

A few years later, during the second Johnstown Flood of 1936, Mike calmly faced a current of a different kind. With most of the townspeople in near-panic as the Conemaugh River waters rose dangerously near the peak of the 1889 disaster, Mike calmly made his way down the steep incline to have a look for himself. Scrambling back up, looking bored and deadpan, he told his rapt little brothers, "It's gonna come, and it's gonna go. And that's just the way it is." The little brothers were awed and calmed by Mike's air of detachment.

By 1933 the Stranks had saved enough money to buy, for cash, a ten room duplex on the side of a hill above the Conemaugh. The family kept five rooms for itself and rented out the other five. This would prove Vasil's greatest claim on the good life in America. The Stranks were living in unimaginable luxury now: When Mary came along a little later that year, she was delivered by an actual midwife. Her arrival in the family gave the three boys an expanded cycle of duties at night: One would wash the dishes, one would dry them, and the third would take the baby out for a stroll. (Jokester Mike at times would turn this into a Three Stooges routine, slipping his dried dishes back into the sink for John to wash all over again.)

Games of marbles on the kitchen floor. Touch football on the hard town streets; leather basketballs heaved at quivering hoops tied to telephone poles. Pennies saved for baseball cards and the collection plate. At night the three brothers sprawled near the kitchen stove, studying—Mike tutoring each of them in turn. "Mike would help Pete and me with our homework," John Strank remembered. "He'd tutor us on the floor, near the stove where it was nice and warm." The good life for the Stranks began to feel as though it would never end.

It seemed that the mills, like the rest of America, would keep on expanding forever, belching ever-brighter flames. Franklin Borough had grown so confident of its unending prosperity that it built a new municipal building, so opulent in its gleaming white brick that it was nicknamed the Taj Mahal. The movie star Gene Kelly had come to town; he did a song-and-dance routine with the local sheriff at its dedication.

But things were not destined to go one like that forever. The year of the "Taj Mahal" dedication and Gene Kelly's soft-shoe was a year of upheaval. The year was 1929.

The Depression had sunk into eastern Pennsylvania well before Mike Strank graduated from high school in 1937. Soup kitchens had replaced the bustling activity in the mines and the mills; a steelworkers' strike had failed badly. Thousands of Slavs foraged for new jobs.

The smoke, dust, grime, and blackened skies of Mike's childhood seemed permanent features of the landscape. Even for a bright boy like Mike, college was beyond hope, the costs unimaginable. (His 'Ambition,' as noted in his 1937 high-school yearbook, was: "To Be President.")

Some workers had come to Franklin Borough while he was in high school; men who said they belonged to something called the WPA. President Roosevelt had created it so that people could work their way out of poverty. These WPA men had built a band shell in the town; sidewalks; some sewers. Mike learned that the men were being paid the impressive sum of fifty-seven dollars a month. He decided that he would see what Mr. Roosevelt had available for him.

He ended up in a similar brainstorm of the President's, one that perfectly suited his energy and developing physique: the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC workers planted millions of trees across America; they released nearly a billion game fish into the country's rivers and lakes; they built wildlife shelters, created camping grounds, and dug thousands of miles of canals for irrigation and transportation.

But the CCC had a greater function—one that did not fully reveal itself until America went to war. It served as a premilitary training experience for some three million boys, many of whom would flood into the armed services after Pearl Harbor. Administered by the Army, the CCC introduced its recruits to camp life, to military discipline, to physical fitness and to a sense of loyalty to comrades and to a cause.

All this was certainly true of Mike Strank. The former French horn player, scholar and good Catholic boy disappeared into the CCC in 1937 weighing 140 pounds and reemerged two years later a strapping 180, tanned and handsome. He had headed first for the Petrified Forest in Arizona; then he came back to Pennsylvania, working as a laborer on highway projects for another year.

He would have stayed on happily in the CCC, swinging an ax and hauling concrete under the great American sun, but the government denied his application for an extension: His father had by then found work a couple of days a week, and the family was no longer technically destitute.

Mike Strank was nineteen now. The year was 1939. In Europe, Hitler's legions were overrunning his Czech homeland, making slaves of his people.

Mike decided to join the Marines.

He didn't have to do it. He could have avoided military service altogether, given his Czech citizenship. Brother John always puzzled over the fact that the Marines allowed him in at all: Apparently, no one checked out his nationality.

Mike enlisted on October 6, 1939. He was the only one of the six flag-raisers to sign up before America entered the war. But soon the brainy Czech boy would transform himself into prototype American fighting man: a tough, drive, and consummate leader, advancing without complaint toward what he came to understand was his certain death." [pp. 47 – 54]

On the day of the bombing at Pearl Harbor, the six boys that later raised the flag on Iwo Jima were: "Mike Strank was the oldest at twenty-one, already a Marine corporal with two years of service. Pima Ira Hayes was an eighteen-year-old sophomore at the Phoenix Indian School with eight months to go before he enlisted in the Marines. Six months younger than Ira, Jack Bradley was a recent high-school graduate and apprenticing his way to a Wisconsin funeral director's license. Harlon Block was seventeen, still a school year away from his senior heroics for the Weslaco Panthers. Franklin Sousey was a sixteen-year-old junior in high school, rushing home to do his chores. Rene Gagnon was only fifteen, in his second and last year of high school, soon to melt into the routine of New Hampshire mill life.

Mike was three year older than Ira, six years older than Rene, large gaps for young boys. The boys would always behold Mike as their grizzled leader, the "old man." The six boys would meet each other for the first time in April of 1944 when they came together at a new camp to form a new Marine division. Each of them arrived there by different paths." [page 75]

"Prior to Iwo Jima, Mike, Harlon and Ira fought in Bougainville and they would not discuss it. Something happened to them and they felt death was never far from their thoughts." (page 88). "Mike returned to Franklin Borough worn out from battle and a case of malaria he contracted at Bougainville. His friends Mike and Eva Slazich took him out for an evening on the town. They saw a movie, a war movie. Slazich asked his friend what he thought of the movie. Mike Strank remarked quietly: "It isn't really like that." At the end of the evening Mike turned to his friend and said, "I doubt if I'll ever see you again. I don't think I am coming back." (page 91).

On Iwo Jima, Mike was leading his Marines across a "rough, exposed ground against a heavily fortified ridge. A cluster of Japanese snipers opened up on them". . . They "dove behind an outcropping that

seemed to give them solid protection from three sides. Its only exposure was toward the sea, where the American destroyers lay at anchor. As sniper fire continued to rake the area, Mike sized up the situation with a veteran's detachment. . . He was on one knee with Franklin and the other guys around, getting ready to draw a plan in the sand to get (them) out of there. But before he could get a word out, a shell exploded. Franklin . . . were bowled over by the blast, but uninjured. . .woke up a few seconds later. Mike Strank did not wake up. The shell got Mike where he gave it. The impact tore a hole in his chest and ripped out his heart." (pages 230-231).

Mike was temporarily buried on Iwo Jima "in Plot 3, Row 5". A message had been chiseled outside the cemetery, "When you go home, Tell them for us and say, For your tomorrow, We gave our today." (page 247).

"Mike Strank was buried at Arlington. Interment in the National Cemetery seemed fitting for the young man known universally as a "Marine's Marine." "In the fall of 1948. . .Harry S. Truman . . .trooped into the living room of the tiny duplex that Vasil and Martha had scrimped to acquire many years earlier. As he took leave of Mike's parents, Truman noticed young Mary standing quietly by the door. He bent down and said to her, "It was an honor to meet your parents." (page 320)

The sculptor Felix de Weldon worked six years to complete the bronze statue of the flagraising on Suribachi, Iwo Jima. The statue, at Arlington National Cemetery, "would rise a hundred and ten feet from the ground and would weigh more than a hundred tons. The unveiling date, November 10, 1954 (is)—the shared birthdays of Mike Strank and the U.S. Marine Corps." (page 326). None of the six young men are identified on the statue, only the sculptor. The monument honors all those who fought.

I would like to recognize the author, James Bradley with Ron Powers, who wrote about the men who fought on Iwo Jima. Mr. Bradley wrote about the lives of many of these young men from their birth to their death. Flags of Our Fathers touches the human experience of war and I would encourage you to read it. Submitted by: Anči Huber

Bradley, J. & Powers, R. (2000). Flags of Our Fathers. New York: Bantam Books.



Mike Strank - Fire Communion.

Mike Strank, in camouflage, on Bougainville





SOKOL BALTIMORE
P.O. Box 448
Perry Hall, MD 21128

DATED MATERIAL



[Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima](#) by Joe Rosenthal
for the [Associated Press](#)

**The Winter meeting
of the general membership of CSHA
will be held
Sunday, January 22nd 2012 at 3:00 PM
in the Parish Center
of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen
5200 North Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21210.
(The Parish Center is the small separate building
behind the church.)**

Jana Kopelentova Rehak, Ph.D.
born in Susice, Czech Republic, now living in
Baltimore

will speak about her forthcoming book

***Czech Political Prisoners: Recovering
Face.***

The book is a study of the aftermath of
Communist suppression of political prisoners and
their hardships after returning to the society run
by the Communist government.

Sokol Baltimore, Inc.

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