

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 155

In Memory  
of  
John Basilone

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of Texas is proud to pay tribute to the life of Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, a World War II Hero and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and to declare February 19, 2003, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone Day; and

**WHEREAS**, John Basilone, was a resident of Raritan, New Jersey, and served in the First Marine Division and the Fifth Marine Division of the United States Marine Corps during World War II; and

**WHEREAS**, While serving as a gunnery sergeant in the First Marine Division in the Lunga area, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Sergeant Basilone performed heroically in a fierce battle with a Japanese regiment over October 24 and 25, 1942; at great risk to his life, he fought valiantly against the enemy, operated and repaired heavy machine guns after one of his gun crews was incapacitated, and gallantly defended his position until replacements arrived; and

**WHEREAS**, He also battled his way through enemy lines to carry urgently needed shells to his gunners, contributing in great measure to the virtual annihilation of a Japanese regiment; and

**WHEREAS**, For his heroism, Sergeant Basilone became the first enlisted Marine to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor, which was awarded to him by President Franklin D. Roosevelt; and

**WHEREAS**, John Basilone returned to his country a true war hero, and his hometown of Raritan welcomed him with a large gathering in his honor; he was sent on a 10-state war bond tour with such celebrities as Frederic March, Martha Scott, and John Garfield, and he was offered a second lieutenant's commission, which he turned down; and

**WHEREAS**, John married Lena Rigi, a fellow Marine sergeant, in 1944, and later, desirous of returning to combat, he was assigned to the newly formed Fifth Marine Division and landed on Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945; that same morning, he again performed heroically, guiding a trapped tank away from a minefield and destroying an enemy Japanese blockhouse; John Basilone was killed when an enemy mortar shell exploded as he and three of his men set up machine guns near Montoyama Airfield #1; and

**WHEREAS**, Sergeant Basilone was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, and he was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his last act of heroism on behalf of his country; since the 1980s, a parade in John's honor has been held annually in his hometown of Raritan, New Jersey; today, a national effort to have a postage stamp issued in his honor is underway; and

**WHEREAS**, John Basilone acted with courage and selflessness on behalf of his country; his acts of great personal valor were in keeping with the highest traditions of United States military service; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, hereby pay tribute to the late John Basilone and encourage Texans across the state to observe Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone Day; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared as an expression of the high regard of the Texas Senate.

Estes

---

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on February 19, 2003, by a rising vote.

---

Secretary of the Senate

---

Member, Texas Senate