



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1230-2000, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1230

Resolution urging the United States Post Office to issue a commemorative stamp for United States Marine Corps Sergeant John Basilone in recognition of his heroism and bravery in defending his nation during World War II.

By The Speaker (Council Member Vallone) and Council Members Malave-Dilan, Espada, Lasher, Michels, Abel and Golden; also Council Members Cruz, Fisher, Foster, Leffler, Nelson, O'Donovan, Povman, Rivera, Robles and Stabile

Whereas, During his service in World War II, John Basilone demonstrated the rarest kind of bravery and courage, repeatedly placing himself in harm's way to help his fellow soldiers and ceaselessly pursuing an American victory in every battle in which he partook; and

Whereas, One battle in particular, during three rainy October days in 1942, brought out the very best in Sergeant Basilone and indeed, the very best that we could ever hope for in a soldier when he defied all odds during a grueling battle in Guadalcanal in the Pacific to win a major victory against enemy Japanese troops; and

Whereas, During a fierce head-on attack by the well-known Sendai regiment, Sergeant Basilone, a gunnery sergeant, and his regiment were left to fight with a severely disabled gun operation, but Sergeant Basilone moved an extra gun into position, swiftly repaired and then manned another gun and changed barrels in almost total darkness and under relentless enemy fire; and

Whereas, With ammunition low, weather conditions worsening, supply lines cut off and enemy fire continuing to threaten the lives of his fellow soldiers and himself, Sergeant Basilone battled his way through hostile lines with urgently needed shells for his gunners; and

Whereas, As a result of Sgt. Basilone's quick thinking, gunnery skills and most of all, his unwavering courage and commitment to ensuring the safety of his men and securing a victory against the enemy Japanese, American forces defeated the Sendai regiment; and

Whereas, When John Basilone returned from battle, he became the war's first Marine to receive the Medal of Honor and the first enlisted Marine to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor; he received a Citation from President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was greeted by a parade attended by 30,000 people in his hometown of Raritan, New Jersey; and

Whereas, Having become somewhat of a celebrity, with his photo on the cover of Life Magazine and his name being used to promote bonds and the war effort, Sergeant Basilone grew uncomfortable in his role as, what he called, a "museum piece" and requested to be sent back into battle; and

Whereas, Sergeant Basilone, who had first enlisted in the United States Army at the age of eighteen, where he got the nickname "Manila John," and then joined the Marines shortly after he returned home, would once again set off to defend his country and be amongst his fellow soldiers; and

Whereas, Unfortunately, it would be Sergeant Basilone's final tour of duty, to the sands of Iwo Jima, where he single-handedly destroyed a Japanese blockhouse and drove hundreds of troops off the beaches before being killed in battle while leading his men; and

Whereas, Sergeant John Basilone was killed on February 19, 1945, receiving a posthumous Navy Cross and Purple Heart, but to the troops he led throughout World War II and to the countless people who took great pride in knowing that a man like John Basilone was fighting on the frontline, he would not be forgotten; and

Whereas, Honoring Sergeant Basilone, a true American hero, by issuing a United States postage stamp in his honor would help preserve his memory and bring his story of courage and honor to a new generation of Americans; and

Whereas, A number of outstanding individuals and Italian-American advocacy groups have worked to promote the campaign for a Sgt. John Basilone stamp including Peter Ippolito, head of Concerned Citizens, who jumpstarted a petition drive, and the Italian/American One Voice Committee, under the distinguished chairmanship of Dr. Emanuele A. Alfano as well as UNICO, Fieri National, the National Italian American Foundation and the Order Sons of Italy in America; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the United States Post Office to issue a commemorative stamp for United States Marine Corps Sergeant John Basilone in recognition of his heroism and bravery in defending his nation during World War II.

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