



John Basilone

(November 4, 1916 – February 19, 1945)

John Basilone was a [United States Marine Gunnery Sergeant](#) who received the nation's highest military award for valor, the Medal of Honor, for heroism during the Battle of Guadalcanal in World War II. He was the only enlisted Marine to receive both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross in World War II.

During the Battle for Henderson Field, his unit came under attack by a regiment of approximately 3,000 soldiers from the Japanese Sendai Division. On October 24, 1942, Japanese forces began a frontal attack using machine guns, grenades, and mortars against the American heavy machine guns. Basilone commanded two sections of machine guns that fought for the next two days until only Basilone and two other Marines were left standing. Basilone moved an extra gun into position and maintained continual fire against the incoming Japanese forces. He then repaired and manned another machine gun, holding the defensive line until replacements arrived. As the battle went on, ammunition became critically low.



Despite their supply lines having been cut off by enemies in the rear, Basilone fought through hostile ground to resupply his heavy machine gunners with urgently needed ammunition. When the last of it ran out shortly before dawn on the second day, Basilone held off the Japanese soldiers attacking his position using his pistol. By the end of the engagement, Japanese forces opposite their section of the line were virtually annihilated. For his actions during the battle, he received the United States military's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

While stationed at Camp Pendleton, he met his future wife, Lena Mae Riggi, who was a Sergeant in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. They were married at St. Mary's Star of the Sea Church in Oceanside, on July 10, 1944, with a reception at the Carlsbad Hotel. John joined the Knights of Columbus and became a 4th degree Knight.

Medal of Honor citation:

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR
to
SERGEANT
JOHN BASILONE
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

A partial copy from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Basilone