

Marine GySgt John Basilone was 1 of 10 children of an Italian-born tailor, Salvatore Basilone, and his wife Dora. He was born in Buffalo, NY and raised in Raritan, NJ.

He enlisted in the Army when he was 18 and served in the Philippines, where he picked up the nickname "Manila John." He fought as a light heavy-weight prizefighter in the Army, going undefeated in 19 fights. He received an honorable discharge after completing his 3-year enlistment, returned home, and worked briefly as a truckdriver.

In July 1940, sensing war clouds on the horizon, John Basilone enlisted in the Marine Corps. In October 1942, he was serving with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, on Guadalcanal. For 6 months, the Army and Marines had fought a bloody battle to hold a critical airfield on that island. On October 24, GySgt John Basilone and 14 other marines were ordered to hold back many times that number of elite Japanese troops.

A private first class serving under him would later recall that, "Basilone had a machine gun on the go for three days and three nights without sleep." He fired machine guns, fixed guns, and crawled repeatedly through Japanese lines to get more ammunition. When the sun rose the next morning, the marines still held the airfield, and John Basilone was credited by his men with giving them the will to fight on the most terrifying night of their lives.

For his heroism at Guadalcanal, John Basilone was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and ordered home to take part in a war bonds tour. The tour brought in \$1.4 million in pledges. He crisscrossed the country, met Hollywood startlets, and even met his wife, another marine, at Camp Pendleton. He could have remained stateside for the remainder of the war but, he turned down the bars of a second lieutenant because, he said, he didn't want to become "a museum piece." In his words, "I'm a plain soldier, and I want to stay one." So just before Christmas 1944, he kissed his new wife goodbye and rejoined his "boys" in the Pacific.

On February 19, 1945, SGT John Basilone was serving with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 5th Marine Division during the first day of the invasion of Iwo Jima. He was on the island less than 2 hours when an enemy artillery round exploded, killing Basilone and four members of his platoon. He had just destroyed an enemy blockhouse, enabling the marines to capture another critical airfield. On his left arm were tattooed the words "Death before Dishonor." John Basilone was 27 years old.

He was awarded the Navy Cross and Purple Heart posthumously, making him the only enlisted marine in World War II to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, and the Purple Heart. He was also awarded the American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pa-

cific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Citation with Star, and Presidential Unit Citation with Bar.

After the war, John Basilone was reburied at Arlington National Cemetery. In 1949, the USS Basilone, a destroyer, was commissioned in his honor. Today, a life-sized bronze statue of him watches over his hometown of Raritan, NJ, and in 1981, Raritan began a parade in his honor. It remains the only parade in the Nation dedicated to the memory of one veteran.

The National Italian American Foundation, the Order of the Sons of Italy of America, the Sergeant John Basilone Foundation, and veterans and marines organizations worked long and hard to see this "plain soldier," as John Basilone called himself, included among the marine heroes honored on the new stamps. We thank them for helping to make a new generation of Americans aware of the service and sacrifices of this son of an Italian immigrant, a true American hero.

When he died, The New York Times noted in an editorial that there always had been Americans like John Basilone, willing to fight for their country even when they knew their luck wouldn't last. "The finest monument they could have," the newspaper said, "would be an enduring resolve by all of us to this time fashion an enduring peace."

Let us never forget how much we owe John Basilone and all those who have given so much, over so many generations, so that we can live free.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

##### PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DUSTIN YANCEY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I address the Senate in tribute to PFC Dustin Yancey, originally from Cedar Rapids, IA and more recently from Goose Creek, SC. Private First Class Yancey was tragically killed on November 7, 2005 during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His Humvee was struck by an improvised explosive device and both Private First Class Dustin Yancey and Captain James M. Gurbisz were killed. Private First Class Yancey served with the 26th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division based in Fort Stewart, GA. He was only 22 years old.

I ask that the Senate, the people of Iowa, and all Americans stand today and recognize the sacrifice that Private First Class Yancey made yearlier this month. Our country has survived throughout the centuries due to the brave men and women who have composed our Armed Forces, and I am saddened to announce to the Senate that another of our bravest will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

We could all learn from the patriotism and spirit of Private First Class Yancey. His cousin, Brian Yancey of Cedar Rapids, IA, remembered that Private First Class Yancey "was very

much a patriot, very much a military man. He was a person who wanted to do what he could for his country."

We must remember Private First Class Yancey's family, in both Georgia and Iowa, and stand with them during this time of loss and grief. The thoughts and prayers of countless Americans go out to Private First Class Yancey's family and friends. He did not die in vain, but rather gave his life for the promotion of freedom and security around the world. He will be sorely missed, but will also be an inspiration for future brave Americans for years to come.

#### U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL SERVING IN IRAQ

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to share with my colleagues another positive story from a member of the U.S. Armed Forces currently serving in Iraq. His story, once again, depicts the frustration that so many of our servicemembers have with the lack of public attention in the U.S. to the humanitarian and military successes of their work in Iraq.

I recently received a letter in the mail from Ms. Ann Sensenich of Boiling Springs, PA. Ms. Sensenich wrote to me:

DEAR MR. SANTORUM: Enclosed is a copy of a letter I received from one of our soldiers serving our country in Iraq. I am forwarding this to you as I feel this is a letter that should not be viewed by only my eyes.

I have been sending packages to my employer's son in Iraq and he forwards them on to his soldiers and this is one of the responses I received.

Please share this letter with anyone you feel would appreciate the service of this and all our U.S. soldiers defending our country and keep in mind he indicated he would go back seven times before he would let terrorists on our soil.

Thank you for reading this and please share his words with others.

Sincerely,

ANN B. SENSENICH.

Attached to Ms. Sensenich's correspondence is the letter that a deployed servicemember wrote to her when her package was shared with fellow servicemembers. He wrote:

DEAR ANN SENSENICH, I am deployed with the 3/3 ACR. We received your package, and I just wanted to take a little bit of my time to say thanks.

Your package helped with the morale of a lot of soldiers. Due to the negative feedback we get from the media and people back home, it is nice to receive a package from someone who supports us and what we do.

People like you are the reason why we fight this war. We sit over here day to day risk getting shot at or having mortar rounds dropped in on us so that the people back home (like yourself) can keep on enjoying the freedoms that a lot of people take for granted everyday. I, myself used to take those things for granted also until I was deployed to fight for our freedom. This is my second deployment, and this is the first time that we have received a package from someone in the states. So, thank you for your unselfishness, and don't ever feel bad for the soldiers that are over here fighting this war. This is our job! This is what we were trained