

**DISTINGUISHED MARINE STAMPS DEDICATION CEREMONY – NOVEMBER 10, 2005
MARINE BARRACKS (HOME OF THE COMMANDANT'S) WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**(Photos by Gerald T. Merna, U. S. Postal Service)
(Compiled and Captioned by Gerald F. Merna)**



UNITED STATES MARINE DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS



U.S. MARINE CORPS CEREMONIAL MARCHING UNIT, MARINE BARRACKS, WASH., D.C.



Gen. Michael W. Hagee



U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard



Mascot Sgt. Chesty XII



Postmaster General J.W. Potter



UNVEILING CEREMONY OF DISTINGUISHED MARINE STAMPS



General Hagee and Postmaster General Potter unveil stamps honoring: LtGen. John A. Lejeune; LtGen. Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller; GySgt. John Basilone and SgtMaj. Daniel Joseph Daly as Country Music Singer Aaron Tippin performs



First Lieutenant Gerald F. Merna USMC (Ret.) (1947 – 1968) chats with Marine Commandant General Michael W. Hagee, USMC under Portrait of LtGen. John A. Lejeune, 13TH Commandant of the Marine Corps (1920-1929)

4 Marines given stamp of honor



Maj. Bradley Weston (left) and Lt. Col. Nick Klaus joined in a ceremony for the Marine Corps' 230th birthday yesterday at Marine Barracks in Southeast. Photographs by Bert V. Goulat/The Washington Times

Postal Service commemorates service and sacrifice for country

By Tarron Lively
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Marine Corps received a present yesterday for its 230th birthday — a set of commemorative stamps from the U.S. Postal Service honoring four Marines who helped define the military service.

Postmaster General John E. Potter and Gen. Michael W. Hagee, the commandant of the Marine Corps, presented the stamps at a ceremony at the Marine Barracks in Southeast before hundreds of guests, including family members of the distinguished Marines — Sgt. John Basilone, Sgt. Maj. Daniel J. Daly, Lt. Gen. John A. Lejeune and Lt. Gen. Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller.

“Every Marine on active duty looks to them for inspiration,” Gen. Hagee said.

Mr. Potter said the words inscribed on the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington — “Among the Americans who served on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue” — remain relevant today.

“Those words still apply . . . to all members of our nation’s military, still answering the call of our nation at home and around the world.”



Martha Puller Downes of Alexandria admired the image of her father, Marine Lt. Gen. Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller, on a new postage stamp.

Mark Saunders, the Postal Service spokesman, said about 60 million of the four stamps will be in circulation.

“We think they’ll be in extremely popular demand with the [retired] Marines and their families,” he said.

Martha Puller Downes, the daughter Lt. Gen. Puller, was among



Bert V. Goulat/The Washington Times.

Sgt. Chesty XII — a four-year-old English bulldog named after Marine Lt. Gen. Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller — joined a celebration at the Marine Barracks in Southeast for the Corps’ 230th birthday at which the U.S. Postal Service unveiled stamps honoring four Marines.

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those who attended the ceremony.

“I just wish my father could’ve been there,” said Mrs. Downes, of Alexandria. “If he had been, I’m sure he would have said how wonderful of a profession it is to serve your county. He would want every Marine that served with him on that stamp. They made him look good, that’s what he always told me.”

The stamp of Gen. Puller shows him at Koto-ri, Korea, in 1950. He was a battalion commander and regimental commander with the 1st Marine Division during World War II and the Korean War.

“It’s a very big honor for the family,

and I’m sure General Puller would be very proud,” said Virginia state Sen. Linda T. “Toddy” Puller, a Fairfax Democrat and daughter-in-law of Gen. Puller.

Gerald F. Merna, a retired Marine Corps first lieutenant, said Gen. Puller’s legacy is renowned throughout the Corps.

“Marines learn history and tradition from the day they get there until the day they graduate,” Lt. Merna said. “So they learn who the legends of the Corps are. Any kid that goes through boot camp knows about Chesty Puller.”

Mrs. Downes thanked the Postal Service for making the beautiful stamps and the “old-timer Marines” for pursuing the idea until its end.

“I’m sure the Marines up in heaven

are smiling,” she said.

Jerry Cutter of Hilton Head, S.C., the nephew of Sgt. Basilone, agreed.

“It feels wonderful,” he said. “We’ve been working on this for four years, and we’re very happy.”

Sgt. Basilone received the Medal of Honor, a Purple Heart and the Navy Cross. He served and died with the 1st Battalion, 27th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division during the invasion of Iwo Jima in 1945.

Mr. Cutter, 70, organized the John Basilone Foundation two years ago and started a grass-roots campaign for the Postal Service to honor his uncle.

“As far as we’re concerned, he’s still very much alive,” Mr. Cutter said. “Sixty years after the fact, he still lives in the Marine Corps every day.”