

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION No. 103

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Joint Resolution No. 103.

This joint resolution designates September 22 of each year as “John Basilone Day” to honor the extraordinary heroism displayed by New Jersey native John Basilone at the Battles of Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima during World War II. This resolution also respectfully requests that the Governor issue an annual proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.

On October 24, 1942, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone, along with two other machine gun units, were tasked with defending a key Allied landing strip from Japanese forces at the Battle of Guadalcanal. As these Marines engaged with enemy forces, one of their machine gun posts fell victim to enemy gunfire. Recognizing the danger this posed to the remaining men and with total disregard for his own life, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone raced nearly 200 yards carrying a 90-pound machine gun to reinforce the faltering line. Gunnery Sergeant Basilone also ran through enemy gunfire repairing nearby machine gun posts and resupplying his men with ammunition. After three days without any food or sleep, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone and two other Marines held off the Japanese attack until reinforcements arrived. It was the efforts of these men, in addition to the thousands of other American troops fighting in the region, which helped ensure a crucial victory for Allied forces in the Pacific Theater.

For his actions, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and returned to the United States where he was given a hero's welcome. To assist in the financing of the war, he then embarked on a nationwide tour encouraging people across the country to purchase war bonds. Despite being offered the opportunity to spend the rest of the war as an officer stateside, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone refused and requested a return to combat. He was then sent to train with a Marine unit for an invasion of the island of Iwo Jima.

On February 19, 1945, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone landed at Iwo Jima where he freed a group of Marines trapped on the beach, led their assault of an enemy guard post, and helped an Allied tank navigate an enemy minefield. As he prepared another attack, he was struck by

mortar fire and succumbed to his injuries on the first day of battle. Gunnery Sergeant Basilone was again recognized for his heroic actions and posthumously awarded the Navy Cross and the Purple Heart. At the conclusion of World War II, his body was brought back to the United States and reburied with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Today, he remains the only member of the armed forces to have earned both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross.

The State of New Jersey is proud to recognize Gunnery Sergeant Basilone's extraordinary service to our country and encourages the people of New Jersey to take time to learn about such a remarkable figure in our State's history.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.