

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 157

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:

Senator DOUGLAS J. STEINHARDT

District 23 (Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Space

SYNOPSIS

Designates September 22 as "John Basilone Day."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/1/2026)

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1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating September 22 of each year as
2 “John Basilone Day.”
3
4 **WHEREAS**, John Basilone was raised in Raritan, New Jersey when he
5 left to enlist in the United States Army at age 17; and
6 **WHEREAS**, Basilone was honorably discharged from the army and
7 began work as a truck driver before enlisting with the United States
8 Marine Corps in 1940, a year before the United States entered
9 World War II; and
10 **WHEREAS**, At the Battle of Guadalcanal, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone
11 commanded two heavy machine gun sections charged with
12 defending Henderson Field, a key Allied airstrip on the Solomon
13 Islands; and
14 **WHEREAS**, With one machine gun post destroyed by Japanese forces,
15 Gunnery Sergeant Basilone raced 200 yards with a 90 pound
16 machine gun in hand to secure a faltering line; and
17 **WHEREAS**, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone also ran through enemy
18 gunfire and between nearby machine gun posts repairing weapons
19 and resupplying fellow Marines with ammunition; and
20 **WHEREAS**, Successfully defending Henderson Field during the Battle
21 of Guadalcanal was a turning point for Allied forces as it
22 established their air superiority in the region and provided a
23 significant advantage in future engagements; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone was awarded the
25 Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at Henderson Field;
26 and
27 **WHEREAS**, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone was then sent back to the
28 United States where he was given a hero’s welcome; and
29 **WHEREAS**, The Marine Corps subsequently placed Gunnery Sergeant
30 Basilone on a nationwide war bonds tour which ultimately yielded
31 \$1.4 million pledged to the war effort; and
32 **WHEREAS**, With a strong desire to return to combat, Gunnery Sergeant
33 Basilone requested reassignment and was sent to Iwo Jima where
34 he freed a group of Marines trapped on the beach, led their assault
35 of an enemy guard post, and helped an Allied tank navigate through
36 a minefield; and
37 **WHEREAS**, As he initiated another attack, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone
38 was struck by mortar fire and succumbed to his wounds on the first
39 day of battle; and
40 **WHEREAS**, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone was posthumously awarded
41 the Navy Cross and the Purple Heart for his actions at Iwo Jima;
42 and
43 **WHEREAS**, Today Gunnery Sergeant Basilone’s heroism and sacrifice
44 are recognized in cities and towns across the country and at various
45 United States military installations; and
46 **WHEREAS**, HBO honored Gunnery Sergeant Basilone in its 2010
47 miniseries “The Pacific” which portrayed the experiences of

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1 American servicemen fighting in the Pacific Theater during World
2 War II; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone is the only member of the
4 armed forces to earn both the Congressional Medal of Honor and
5 the Navy Cross, the nation's two highest military honors, for his
6 actions during World War II; now, therefore,

7

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
9 *State of New Jersey:*

10

11 1. September 22 of each year is designated as "John Basilone
12 Day" in the State of New Jersey to honor the extraordinary heroism
13 displayed by New Jersey native John Basilone at the Battles of
14 Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima during World War II.

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16 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue an annual
17 proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State
18 to observe "John Basilone Day" with appropriate activities and
19 programs.

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21 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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

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

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

10 On February 19, 1945, Gunnery Sergeant Basilone landed at Iwo
11 Jima where he freed a group of Marines trapped on the beach, led
12 their assault of an enemy guard post, and helped an Allied tank
13 navigate an enemy minefield. As he prepared another attack, he
14 was struck by mortar fire and succumbed to his injuries on the first
15 day of battle. Gunnery Sergeant Basilone was again recognized for
16 his heroic actions and posthumously awarded the Navy Cross and
17 the Purple Heart. At the conclusion of World War II, his body was
18 brought back to the United States and reburied with full military
19 honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Today, he remains the only
20 member of the armed forces to have earned both the Medal of
21 Honor and the Navy Cross.

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