



Second Battalion, 4th Marines Association, Inc. The Magnificent Bastards



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Special Edition

Greetings Magnificent Bastards,

The following Special Edition is dedicated in honor of Casey Bazewick~



Casey T. Bazewick, Sr. (1918–2012)

Casey T. Bazewick, Sr., Defender of Bataan and Corregidor, Liberator of Seoul, died peacefully on December 3, 2012 at Life Care Center, Mount Vernon, Washington.

Born in 1918 in Chicago to Polish immigrants, Stefan and Aniela, he was baptized and attended school at St. John Cantius. Inspired by the 1926 silent hit film *Tell It to the Marines*, starring Lon Chaney, he joined the reserves in 1936 and enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1938.

From 1940, in Shanghai, he served with the Fourth Marines – the famed “China Marines” charged with protecting American life and property. Captain Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller, among others, commanded the 2d Battalion. Just days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the understrength regiment of 721 officers and enlisted men was evacuated to the Philippines.

Soon they too came under aerial attack on the Bataan peninsula. Under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, the Marines were ordered to defend the island fortress of Corregidor, where MacArthur and the Philippine president and vice-president (with the country's gold bullion) had retreated.

During an epic siege lasting four months, Casey, in an exposed foxhole, endured continual massive bombardment from land and air. His squad was on Topside, the highest point on the island. Without reinforcements and on reduced rations, the island's defenders held out against overwhelming forces until May 6, 1942, one month after nearby Bataan fell. Defiantly alone, they had long delayed Japan's timetable of conquest. The defense of Corregidor and Bataan is one of the great chapters in American history.

As prisoner of war in the Philippines and Manchuria for 39 months, Casey survived starvation, beatings, torture, untreated diseases, friendly fire, tropical and subzero exposure, medical experimentation, and enslavement. Nearly half the men in his first prison camp died in the first year alone.

At war's end, Casey remained in the Marine Corps as a War Dead Escort. For two years he returned the repatriated remains of servicemen, who had given all for their country, to grateful families for burial. While posted in Columbus, Ohio, he met and married Thelma.

Casey and his rifle company appeared in the 1949 Academy Award-nominated film *Sands of Iwo Jima*, starring John Wayne.

In summer 1950, Casey was on active duty at Camp Pendleton when North Korea launched its overwhelming surprise attack, starting the Korean War – the Cold War's first major conflict. His company became the first Marine infantry unit committed to combat in the war; meanwhile, as First Sergeant, Casey readied another rifle company for deployment.

At a division formation and parade, Casey was surprised to be called front and center to the reviewing stand. For so significantly raising his company's military efficiency, he was commended with special praise as outstanding First Sergeant of the 1st Marine Division.

In September, Casey's Charlie Company participated in the massive Inchon Landing, MacArthur's masterstroke gamble to save South Korea, which was on the brink of collapse. They stormed ashore in the 1st Battalion of the 1st Marines, under the command of Colonel "Chesty" Puller. In fierce action outside Seoul – the largest single objective ever assigned the Marines – Casey volunteered to replace a platoon leader killed in action. He led the platoon at the frontline, driving into the heart of the ancient capital. He would forever be haunted by memories of killing 22 North Korean soldiers in days of hand-to-hand and close-quarter fighting and of the war's impact on civilians.

The 1st Marine Division had reached South Korea just in time to save it. After Seoul was liberated, Casey was hospitalized in the U.S. Though his company commanding officer promised him a recommendation for the Silver Star, he never heard more about it.

Casey became a nationally recognized Marine recruiter in South Bend, Indiana. Widely respected in the community, he earned four coveted "E" flags for excellence in recruiting. His proud commanding officer said, "If Casey can't do it, it can't be done." At the height of his career, he was honorably discharged due to disabling "anxiety reaction," now termed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Casey was recommended for promotion to Second Lieutenant, but inexplicably it did not go through. His lifelong dream of becoming an officer was never realized.

Transition to civilian life was difficult for Casey and his family, but in time he pulled himself up from a string of low-paying jobs and made a successful career in sales and real estate. Yet he lived every day with the memory of war and prison camp. He also had probable traumatic brain injury (TBI). Eventually his service-connected disability was rated 100%.

In 2009, Casey was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received as a prisoner of war. His nursing home was packed with family, residents, and Marines for the moving ceremony. Senator Patty Murray sent an aide to deliver her letter of appreciation for his service.

Casey was preceded in death by his loving and devoted wife, Thelma Bazewick, and three brothers: Steven, John, and Julius.

He is survived by one brother, Edward; children Casey Bazewick, Jr. (Kristi Hein), Carol Barber (Michael), and Carrie Hoy (Carl); stepchildren James Layne, Jerry Layne, and Rita Mills; grandchildren Aaron Hoy (Jeannette), Cindy Schum (Bradley), Candice Barber, Larissa Hoy, Sean Barber, Brandon Hoy, Alison Moore (Matthew), Andrew Hoy, and Patrice Hoy; surviving step-grandchildren Jean Mills, Janice Christy, Mark Layne, Sue Funk, and William Layne; and great-grandchildren Zachary Hoy, Makenna Hoy, Katelynn Hoy, Madilynn Schum, Lily Hoy, and Everett Schum.

Casey's funeral will be at his boyhood church, the baroque St. John Cantius in Chicago, on May 16, 2013. Committal service is planned the following day at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Illinois.

All Marines are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Casey Bazewick, Jr., e-mail: cbgroup@picturesandwords.com.

There is a guest book available to leave your messages.
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/skagitvalleyherald/obituary.aspx?n=CASEY-T-BAZEWICK&pid=161840988>

A side note from BGen William Weise states the following.

First Sergeant Bazewick could legally be addressed as First Sergeant even though he wore 6 stripes, 3 up and 3 down, the same as a Master Sergeant in 1953. He probably served as First Sergeant before he retired. In 1953, if you met a strange Marine wearing 6 stripes you couldn't tell if he was a 1st Sergeant or a Master Sergeant. God help the poor Corporal or Sergeant who addressed a First Sergeant as Master Sergeant.

When 1st Sgt. Bazewick retired in 1953, there were only 7 enlisted pay grades: Pvt (E1), PFC(E2), Cpl. (E3), Sgt. (E4), SSgt. (E5), TSgt(E6), and MSgt(7). First Sergeant and Sergeant Major were duty assignments. Master Sergeants, 1st Sergeants, and Sergeants Major were all pay grade 7 and all wore 6 stripes--3 up and 3 down.

In 1958, pay grades E 8 and E 9 were added. 1st Sergeants and Master Sergeants became E8. Sergeants Major and Master Gunnery Sergeants became E9. The rank Technical Sergeant (TSgt) was eliminated and the rank Gunnery Sergeant (E7) was adopted. SSgt pay grade became E6, Sgt. became E5, Cpl. became E4, Lance Cpl. (a new rank) became E3, PFC became E2, and Pvt. remained E1.