Legends about the Most Decorated Marine in US History

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**We Are the Mighty | By Zackry Colston**

**Lewis "Chesty" Puller (1898-1971), was a 37-year veteran of the USMC, ascended to the rank of Lieutenant General, and is the most decorated Marine in the history of the Corps. He served in: WWII, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Korean War. The concrete facts surrounding his military service are astounding, but his grassroots legacy is carved out by stories echoed through generations of Marines that sound crazy enough to be true only for Puller.**

**His nickname "Chesty" came from the legend that he had a false "steel chest."**

**There are many legends surrounding how Lewis "Chesty" Puller got his nickname. One says that it came from his boisterous, commanding, voice that was miraculously heard over the sounds of battle. There are even some that say that it is literal— and that his chest was hacked away in the banana wars and replaced with an iron steel slab.**

**"All right, they're on our left, they're on our right, they're in front of us, they're behind us, they can't get away this time."**

**This is one of the most iconic quotes from Puller. His men were completely surrounded, and what initially seemed like doom, would soon be revealed to them as the beginnings of victory.**

**He always led by example.**

**Puller famously put the needs of his men in front of his own. In training, he carried his own pack and bedding roll while marching at the head of his battalion. He afforded himself no luxuries his men did not have—usually meaning a diet consisting only of "K" rations. When in New Britain, legend has it that he slept on the bare floor of an abandoned hut and refused to let the native people make him a mattress of banana leaves. And he always refused treatment when wounded until his men had been attended to.**

**Puller surveying the land before mobilizing in the Korean conflict.**

**He was awarded: 5 Navy Crosses, a Distinguished Service Cross, and the Silver Star.**

**Among the many reasons for his highly decorated resume, Puller earned them for: leading his men into five successful engagements against super numbered armed forces in Nicaragua, after a 6 day march he reversed and defeated an ambush on an insurgent platoon that tripled his men in size, held the front against mile-long enemy forces in Guadalcanal, and defended crucial division supply roots against outnumbering forces in sub-zero weather in the Korean War.**

**Smoked a pipe while under bombardment at Guadalcanal.**

**In 1942 "Chesty" was a Lt. Col, and commander of 1st battalion, 7th Marine Regiment at Guadalcanal. He was the only man with combat experience, and many of his men did not dig foxholes. Lt. Col. Puller's leadership was immediately tested as they were bombarded their first night. Puller ran up and down the line, instructing his men to take cover (behind whatever they could) and when it was nearing over, Puller walked the lines while casually smoking a pipe and reassuring his Marines of their eventual victory.**

**Look at that stack...**

**He is portrayed in multiple films.**

**Puller's most notable appearances in film are in HBO's “The Pacific” where he was played by William Sadler, and (perhaps his most iconic representation in American storytelling) in the John Ford documentary about his life “Chesty: A Tribute to a Legend” narrated by John Wayne.**

**"Where the hell do you put the bayonet?"**

**This quote is taken from Puller while at... a FLAMETHROWER demonstration**