



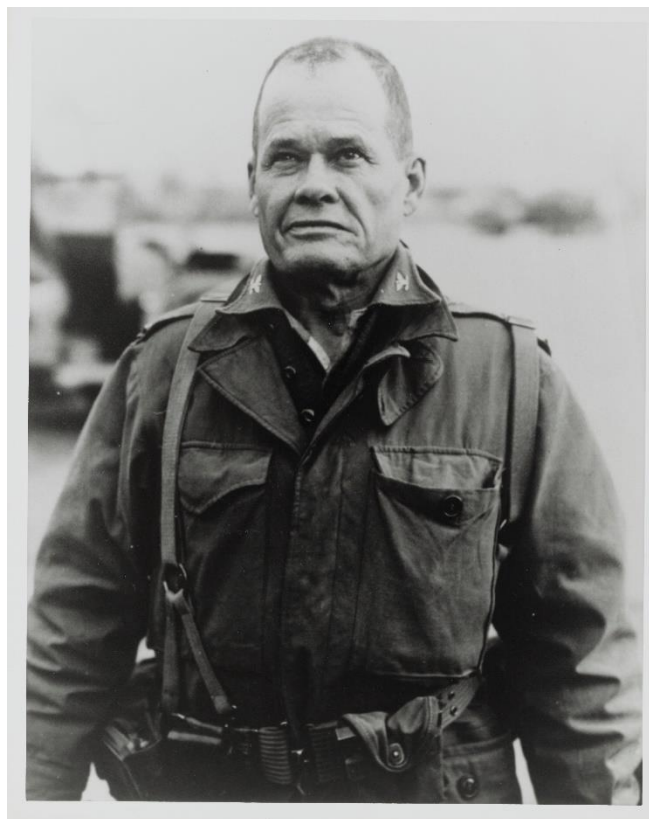
MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller

Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller was born in Tidewater, Virginia, in 1898. After graduating high school in 1917, Puller entered the Virginia Military Institute, attending only one year before leaving to enlist in the Marine Corps in August 1918. Although Marines were fighting in Europe, Puller was sent to Haiti, where he took a commission in the *Gendarmerie d’Haiti*, and excelled as a combat leader against *cacos* rebels.

In 1924, Puller earned a regular commission in the Marine Corps and served at several duty stations in the United States. In 1928, he was stationed in Nicaragua, where he led soldiers of the *Guardia Nacional* and received two Navy Crosses for his stellar combat leadership. Throughout the remainder of the decade, Puller commanded the “Horse Marines” in China, instructed new officers at the Basic School in Philadelphia, and completed a second tour in China. In September 1941, just three months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he took command of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

Puller’s leadership and exploits in World War II are legendary. For his actions at Guadalcanal, he received his third Navy Cross, leading 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, in a fierce defense of Henderson Field in October 1942. As executive officer of the 7th Marines at Cape Gloucester in January 1944, Puller took over the command of two battalions that each lost their commander in battle, earning him a fourth Navy Cross. The next month, he took command of the



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1st Marines, which he led on Peleliu before returning to the United States in November 1944.

During the Korean War, Puller once again commanded the 1st Marines at Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir. He received a fifth Navy Cross for his indomitable leadership during Chosin, saying in his trademark understated way, “We’ve been looking for the enemy for several days now. We’ve finally found them. We’re surrounded. That simplifies our problem of finding these people and killing them.”

He was promoted to brigadier general in 1951, major general two years later, and lieutenant general after his retirement in 1955. Lieutenant General Puller passed away in 1971 at the age of 73. His legend lives on throughout the Corps today.