

"we're surrounded. That simplifies the problem."



## Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller (1898–1971)

Contributed by [Bradford A. Wineman](#)

Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller, whose barrel chest and blunt manner inspired his nickname, was a thirty-seven-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps who rose to the rank of lieutenant general. The most-decorated Marine in history, he earned five Navy Crosses, the U.S. Navy's second-highest decoration, for fighting in Nicaragua, at Guadalcanal and in New Guinea during World War II (1939-1945), and at the Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War (1950-1953).

On Dec. 6, 1950, Chesty was ordered to break out of Chosin Reservoir and open an escape route to Hungnam port. The 80,000-strong PLA was no longer the only enemy confronting the Marines. By now the temperature had dropped to 25 degrees below zero. Fighting every step of the way, Chesty succeeded in not just bringing out the wounded and the dead but also every vehicle and piece of equipment worth saving. Behind him, spread out for miles, lay the broken remnants of seven Chinese divisions\*.

\*Note; The Marines made it out inflicting the highest casualty ratio on an enemy in history and destroying 7 entire enemy divisions in the process. An enemy division is 16500 plus men, while a Marine division is 12500 men.