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My name is Diane Hawkins originally from Raritan, NJ and now living in Paris France. I am the niece of Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, winner of the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross. He is one of the three main characters to be depicted in HBO's upcoming release "The Pacific", the follow up to their hit success "Band of Brothers". I was honoured to work with Hugh Ambrose, on behalf of Bruce McKenna, to help them work out the character of my uncle and our family. It has long been the dream of the family to see John Basilone and his story in a feature film. All my life I have been driven to do something to honour his legacy. From the day I was born I was surrounded by the echoes of my uncle's memory. As a child I lived in the same home as my uncle John. I spent time with my Grandfather and Aunt Mary everyday. After the death of my Grandfather, Mary became the torch bearer keeping John's memory alive and acting as the family liaison to the U.S. Marine Corps . Along with her I was able to attend countless ceremonies and functions, including the Marine Corps Ball. I was also fortunate enough to participate in the Marine Corps Marathon three times on behalf of my uncle. As a health and fitness journalist for the New York Daily News I was a keynote speaker for the Marathon Exposition on nutrition and running. I wrote a script and was featured as an expert in a Marine Corps video on how to run a marathon. Like my uncle, who was known as Manilla John, I became a boxer, Dangerous Diane. Actually, one of the first amateur female boxers. As a champion runner, I have run in over 150 marathons all over the world. I won the National 50 mile (4 consecutive years) and named Ultra Marathoner (3 consecutive years). As a member of the Millrose, I was part of the first woman's team to win the prestigious London to Brighton race. I have worked as an actress in numerous films, television shows, and theatre. I have also produced numerous short films in the United States and Europe.

Now my production company is based out of Paris, France where I pursue my passion for filmmaking. Throughout my life, I have always looked to my uncle's example for guidance and courage. Through my own experiences, I have discovered the importance of being able to dig deep into oneself to accomplish and follow through to meet challenges. John Basilone is the perfect example of what this means. While defending his country and protecting his friends, to whom he was so loyal, he was able to succeed against impossible odds.

I need to make this documentary about the legacy of John Basilone, to tell the story of what he has left behind and how his influence still exists. In doing this film it is my desire that the younger generation will pick up on the kind of values and character possessed by my uncle and others of the "Greatest Generation". I am working on this project with two other filmmakers who are passionate about telling this story and want to see John Basilone's legacy endure. We are not seeking financial success for ourselves with this film. We desire to set up a foundation which is to receive a significant amount of the profits from the film. The purpose of the foundation will be to insure that the annual John Basilone Parade in Raritan can continue. We are also working on an annual race to be held in conjunction with the parade. The foundation will also help existing organizations working to help servicemen and their families in the name of John Basilone.



## JOHN BASILONE THE LEGACY OF A HERO

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### **PROPOSAL**

A documentary film, JOHN BASILONE: THE LEGACY OF A HERO, on the present-day effects of the story of WWII Hero John Basilone, produced by his niece, Diane Hawkins.

### **PURPOSE**

A documentary for general television/cable audiences and DVD release. A significant amount of the profits will go towards charities and events keeping the memory of John Basilone alive.

### **BACKGROUND**

HBO is following their enormously successful “Band of Brothers” with “The Pacific”. One of the three main characters is John Basilone, hero of Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima. He is the only NCO ever awarded both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross. Ordered home after Guadalcanal, Basilone worked promoting government war bonds – but he asked to be returned to combat. He wanted to be with “his boys.” He died on the first day of the battle for Iwo Jima in 1945, making him the only Medal of Honor winner who returned and died in combat. Producer Diane Hawkins – John Basilone’s niece – is obviously well-placed to depict the effect of his extraordinary heroism on a younger generation.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- The John Basilone Parade (Raritan, NJ), Interviews with spectators and organizers.
- The John Basilone Memorial Race.
- Interviews with family members and friends who share their memories of Basilone.
- Family members will also show and talk about personal letters and photos of Basilone.
- An important part of the documentary will show a strong connection with the U.S. Marine Corps, which still use Basilone’s memory (planned footage of training exercises and interview with Marine Corps).
- Another important part will be discussion of the Sergeant John Basilone Foundation and its efforts to keep his legacy alive, through the parade and other charitable actions.
- Interviews with Italian American organizations on Basilone’s importance to the community, plus scenes of the Basilone family house in Italy.
- Additional visuals will be the various memorials to Basilone: bridges, roads, a postal stamp, and the battleship named in his honour.
- Archive footage and photos from the military.
- Last but not least, the documentary will spotlight the influence of Basilone on a younger generation – for example his nephew (performing a rap song he has written about his hero) and his niece (who followed in his footsteps as a boxer, then became a marathon runner, actress, and who is the producer/director of this documentary).

### **BUDGET:**

Estimated \$25,000. Please note that we are intentionally keeping this an independent, low-budget project.

### **PRODUCTION SCHEDULE:**

We will shoot in September/October and expect to have a finished product by January 2010.