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General Louis Hugh Wilson Jr.

Medal of Honor Recipient General Louis Hugh Wilson Jr. was a member of the Army Navy Country Club from 1975-1990, serving in the 2nd World War, Korean War, and Vietnam War. He shaped the Marine Corps following Vietnam, and was the 1st Commandant of the Marine Corps to sit on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



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General Wilson was on the football and track teams as a student at his alma mater, Millsaps College in Mississippi, and enlisted in the Marine Corps reserve in 1941. He was commissioned later that year.

Wilson was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Harry Truman for action as a Captain on Guam in July 1944. Wilson "... pushed up the rugged, open terrain against terrific machine gun and rifle fire for 300 yards and successfully captured the objective. Promptly assuming command of other disorganized units and motorized equipment in addition to his own company and 1 reinforcing platoon, he organized his night defenses in the face of continuous hostile fire and, although wounded 3 times during this 5-hour period, completed his disposition of men and guns before retiring to the company command post for medical attention. Shortly thereafter, when the enemy launched the first of a series of savage counterattacks lasting all night, he voluntarily rejoined his besieged units and repeatedly exposed himself to the merciless hail of shrapnel and bullets, dashing 50 yards into



the open on 1 occasion to rescue a wounded marine lying helpless beyond the frontlines. Fighting fiercely in hand-to-hand encounters, he led his men in furiously waged battle for approximately 10 hours...Then organizing a 17-man patrol, he immediately advanced upon a strategic slope essential to the security of his position and, boldly defying intense mortar, machine gun, and rifle fire which struck down 13 of his men, drove relentlessly forward with the remnants of his patrol to seize the vital ground. ...Wilson succeeded in capturing and holding the strategic high ground in his regimental sector, thereby contributing essentially to the success of his regimental mission and to the annihilation of 350 Japanese troops.

Wilson also served in the Vietnam and Korean Wars, commanding the 1st Marine Amphibious Force of the 3rd Marine Division and Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific.

In 1975 he assumed the office of Commandant of the Marine Corps. In the post-Vietnam era he emphasized quality in the ranks. He increased academic enlistment standards (he wanted 75 percent of recruits to have high school diplomas), ordered the discharge of thousands of Marines with discipline problems, and offered tougher directives on weight requirements. He stressed modernization of the post-Vietnam Marine Corps, insisting on force readiness, responsiveness, and mobility by maintaining fast-moving, hard-hitting expeditionary units.

He was the first commandant to serve full-time on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Wilson continues to be honored. Last year, the Navy commissioned the USS Louis H. Wilson Jr. (DDG-126) in his honor. A building at the Marine Corps Officer Candidates School in Quantico is named for him. He was awarded a Gold medal by the National Football Foundation.

Wilson died at his home in Birmingham, Alabama, in 2005. He is interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Wilson is honored in ANCC's Medal of Honor Library, in the Arlington Clubhouse.