SERGEANT MAJOR DANIEL DALY, USMC

In the nearly 150 year history of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the United States Highest award "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty", only 19 men have been awarded the medal twice. Among them is Marine Sergeant Major Daniel Daly, one of only two marines to receive the Medal of Honor Twice for separate acts of heroism[1].

Daly was born in Glen Cove, Long Island, New York, on 11 November 1873. He was slight of stature, only 5' 6" in height and weighing 132 lbs, yet enjoyed an early reputation as a fighter, a reputation he would prove more than deserved.

Daly was part of the U.S. Embassy Guard in Peking when the Boxer Rebellion broke out in 1900. In one of the most memorable acts of that war, the Boxers surrounded the compound of the foreign legations in Peking and laid siege to it for 55 days. At one point, when German Marines of the German embassy were forced back, Daly by himself took a position in a bastion on the Tarter Wall and remained there throughout the night. Subjected to sniper fire and numerous attacks, when relieved in the morning Private Daly was still holding his position with the bodies of numerous attackers surrounding his position attesting to his bravery. For this he was awarded his first Medal of Honor.

Fifteen years later found Gunnery Sergeant Daly fighting in Haiti fighting against the Cacos. The reconnaissance company of 38 men that Daly belonged to was ambushed by over 400 of the enemy while attempting to ford a river at night. Among the casualties was the mule carrying the company's machine gun. After getting his men to a good position, Daly returned, alone and under enemy fire, to the river and searched for the gun. He found it, and was able to bring the gun and its ammunition back to the Marine position. Daly then took command of one part of a three pronged assault on the rebel position, killing 75 rebels and scattering the rest. As one of the two officers present noted, "Had one squad failed, not one man of the party would have lived to tell the tale. Gunnery Sergeant Daly, 15th Company, during the operations was the most conspicuous figure among the enlisted men." Daly was awarded his second Medal of Honor.

However Daly was not finished yet, there was yet the incident for which he is perhaps best remembered for within the Marines. In June 1918 at the battle of Belleau Wood in World War I the Marines were pinned down under heavy artillery barrage and pinned down. At one point the now 44 year old Daly, led a counter-attack with a battle cry that has become Marines lore "Come on, you sons of -------, do you want to live forever?!" Later in the battle, Daly single handedly eliminated a machine gun nest with nothing more than his 45 pistol and grenades. In the course of the battle he was wounded three times. Daly was recommended through the Army for a third Medal of Honor, but petty bureaucratic politics came into play and he was denied, instead being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross and France's *Médaille Militaire.* Perhaps the greatest tribute was paid by General Smedley D. Butler, the other Marine to win two Congressional Medals of Honor, who called Daly "The fightinest Marine I ever knew." Offered promotion several times, Daly once remarked "I would rather be an outstanding sergeant than just another officer".

Did you Know that…

- **Irish American have been awarded more Medals of Honor than any other heritage group**

- **Of the 12 men who have received the Medal of Honor twice, 6 were Irish Americans**

- **During the Korean War, 28 soldiers of Irish birth were killed as members of the U.S. Military. They would wait 50 years for U.S. citizenship**

- **The first Medal of Honor awarded in the War in Afghanistan was to Navy Seal Lt. Michael P. Murphy, posthumously**

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[1] 5 Marines received both the Army and Navy Medal of Honor for the same action.