

**On behalf of the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Commandant takes great pleasure in presenting the gold lifesaving medal to**

**MASTER SERGEANT RODNEY BUENTELLO  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, RETIRED**

**for acts as set forth in the following**

**CITATION:**

**“For extreme and heroic daring on the afternoon of 8 June 2016, when Master Sergeant Rodney BUENTELLO entered the rushing waters of the Medina River at the City Park Dam in Bandera, TX to save the lives of two teenagers who had been caught in the river’s swift currents. Master Sergeant BUENTELLO was enjoying a family gathering at the park when he heard cries for help from a female teenager who had accidentally fallen from the dam into the turbulent waters. The victim was initially aided by a male teenager who had also rushed into the river to render support. After requesting a family member grab a rope from his truck, Master Sergeant BUENTELLO selflessly entered the dangerous waters to assist the struggling victims. His efforts, combined with the male’s, enabled the female to safely exit the river after being pushed to shore. While fighting the strong circular currents at the base of the dam, Master Sergeant BUENTELLO realized that the male victim was unable to swim or get to safety. Ignoring the mortal danger presented by the raging river, he heroically grabbed the male and singlehandedly brought him to the river bank, enabling him to escape unharmed. His unrelenting actions were the sole reason for the male’s recovery. Battling the overwhelming river currents, and enduring extreme exhaustion due to the tremendous physical effort needed to save the two victims, Master Sergeant BUENTELLO was pulled under by the powerful currents. He had given everything to save two complete strangers, and held nothing back for himself. Master Sergeant BUENTELLO gave his life so that others may live. His unselfish actions and valiant service, despite imminent personal danger, reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of humanitarian service.”**