

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

MAJOR HENRY A. COURTNEY, JR.,
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE,

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Executive Officer of the Second Battalion, Twenty-Second Marines, Sixth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyu Islands, 14 and 15 May 1945. Ordered to hold for the night in static defense behind Sugar Loaf Hill after leading the forward elements of his command in a prolonged fire fight, Major Courtney weighed the effect of a hostile night counterattack against the tactical value of an immediate Marine assault, resolved to initiate the assault, and promptly obtained permission to advance and seize the forward slope of the hill. Quickly explaining the situation to his small remaining force, he declared his personal intention of moving forward and then proceeded on his way, boldly blasting near-by cave positions and neutralizing enemy guns as he went. Inspired by his courage, every man followed without hesitation, and together the intrepid Marines braved a terrific concentration of Japanese gunfire to skirt the hill on the right and reach the reverse slope. Temporarily halting, Major Courtney sent guides to the rear for more ammunition and possible replacements. Subsequently reinforced by twenty-six men and an LVT load of grenades, he determined to storm the crest of the hill and crush any planned counterattack before it could gain sufficient momentum to effect a break-through. Leading his men by example rather than by command, he pushed ahead with unrelenting aggressiveness, hurling grenades into cave openings on the slope with devastating effect. Upon reaching the crest and observing large numbers of Japanese forming for action less than one hundred yards away, he instantly attacked, waged a furious battle and succeeded in killing many of the enemy and in forcing the remainder to take cover in the caves. Determined to hold, he ordered his men to dig in and, coolly disregarding the continuous hail of flying enemy shrapnel to rally his weary troops, tirelessly aided casualties and assigned his men to more

advantageous positions. Although instantly killed by a hostile mortar burst while moving among his men, Major Courtney, by his astute military acumen, indomitable leadership and decisive action in the face of overwhelming odds, had contributed essentially to the success of the Okinawa Campaign and his great personal valor throughout sustained and enhanced the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

/s/ HARRY S. TRUMAN

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