

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

CORPORAL LARRY E. SMEDLEY  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a squad leader with Company D, First Battalion, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On the evening of 20-21 December 1967, Corporal Smedley led his six-man squad to an ambush site at the mouth of Happy Valley, near Phouc Ninh (2) in Quang Nam Province. Later that night, an estimated 100 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army Regulars, carrying 122mm rocket launchers and mortars, were observed moving toward Hill 41. Realizing this was a significant enemy move to launch an attack on the vital Danang complex, Corporal Smedley immediately took sound and courageous action to stop the enemy threat. After he radioed for a reaction force, he skillfully maneuvered his men to a more advantageous position and led an attack on the numerically superior enemy force. A heavy volume of fire from an enemy machine gun positioned on the left flank of the squad inflicted several casualties on Corporal Smedley's unit. Simultaneously, an enemy rifle grenade exploded nearby, wounding him in the right foot and knocking him to the ground. Corporal Smedley disregarded this serious injury and valiantly struggled to his feet, shouting words of encouragement to his men. He fearlessly led a charge against the enemy machine gun emplacement, firing his rifle and throwing grenades, until he was again struck by enemy fire and knocked to the ground. Gravely wounded and weak from loss of blood, he rose and commenced a one-man assault against the enemy position. Although his aggressive and singlehanded attack resulted in the destruction of the machine gun, he was struck in the chest by enemy fire and fell mortally wounded. Corporal Smedley's inspiring and courageous actions, bold initiative, and selfless devotion to duty in the face of certain death were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.