The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to
FIRST LIEUTENANT WILLIAM DEANE HAWKINS, USMC,
for service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

"For valorous and gallant conduct above and beyond the
call of duty as Commanding Officer of a Scout-Sniper Pla-
toon attached to the Second Marines, Second Marine Division
in action against Japanese-held Tarawa in the Gilbert Island
November 20 and 21, 1943. The first to disembark from a
jeep lighter, First Lieutenant Hawkins unhesitatingly moved
forward under heavy enemy fire at the end of Betio pier,
neutralizing emplacements in coverage of troops assaulting
the main beach positions. Fearlessly leading his men on to
join the forces fighting desperately to gain a beachhead, he
repeatedly risked his life throughout the day and night to
direct and lead attacks on pill boxes and installations with
grenades and demolitions. At dawn on the following day,
First Lieutenant Hawkins returned to the dangerous mission
of clearing the limited beachhead of Japanese resistance,
personally initiating an assault on a hostile position fort-
ified by five enemy machine-guns and, crawling forward in
the face of withering fire boldly fired pointblank into the
loopholes and completed the destruction with grenades. Re-
lying to withdraw after being seriously wounded in the
chest during this skirmish, First Lieutenant Hawkinsstead-
fastly carried the fight to the enemy, destroying three
more pill boxes before he was caught in a burst of Japanese
shellfire and mortally wounded. His relentless fighting
spirit in the face of formidable opposition and his excep-
tionally daring tactics were an inspiration to his comrades
during the most crucial phase of the battle and reflect
the highest credit upon the United States Naval Service.
He gallantly gave his life for his country."