

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 Platoon attached to the Second Marines, Second Marine Division in action against Japanese-held Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands 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 fortified 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. Refusing to withdraw after being seriously wounded in the chest during this skirmish, First Lieutenant Hawkins steadfastly 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 exceptionally 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."