

Citation

FIRST LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER BONNYMAN, JR. USMC

Born 2 May 1910 – Died 22 November 1943

Recipient of the Medal of Honor posthumously for service set forth in the following citation:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Executive Officer of the Second Battalion Shore Party, Eighth Marines, Second Marine Division, during the assault against enemy Japanese-held Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, 20-22 November 1943.

Acting on his own initiative, when assault troops were pinned down at the far end of the Betio Pier by the overwhelming fire of Japanese shore batteries, First Lieutenant Bonnyman repeatedly defied the blasting fury of the enemy bombardment to organize and lead the besieged men over the long open pier to the beach and then, voluntarily obtaining flame throwers and demolitions, organized his pioneer shore party into assault demolitions and directed the blowing of several hostile installations before the close of D-Day. Determined to effect an opening in the enemy’s strongly organized defense line the following day, he voluntarily crawled approximately 40 yards forward of our lines and placed demolitions in the entrance of a large Japanese emplacement as the initial move, in his planned attack against the heavily garrisoned, bombproof installation, which was stubbornly resisting despite the destruction early on our forces and holding up our advance. Withdrawing only to replenish his ammunition, he led his men in a renewed assault, fearlessly exposing himself to the merciless slash of hostile fire as he stormed the formidable bastion, directed the placement of demolition charges in both entrances and seized the top of the bombproof position, flushing more than 100 of the enemy who were instantly cut down, and effecting the annihilation of approximately 150 troops inside the emplacement. Assailed by additional Japanese after he had gained this objective, he made a heroic stand on the edge of the structure, defending his strategic position of the enemy before he fell, mortally wounded. By his dauntless fighting spirit, unrelenting aggressiveness, and forceful leadership through out 3 days of unremitting, violent battle, Lieutenant Bonnyman had inspired his men to heroic effort, enabling them to beat off the counterattack and break the back of hostile resistance in that sector for an immediate gain of 400 yards with no further casualties to our forces in the this zone. He gallantly gave his life for his country.”

(signed)

Harry S. Truman