

2 May 1946

From: Captain Winfield S. CUNNINGHAM, USN, (56074)
(Commander Naval Activities, Wake Island, 1941)
To : The Secretary of the Navy
(Board of Decorations and Medals)
Subj: Recommendation for the Navy Cross - case of
Lawton Ely SHANK, M.D.
Encl: (A) Sample citation.

1. It is recommended that the Navy Cross be awarded to Lawton Ely Shank, M.D., for services as described below.
2. While associated in a civilian capacity with the naval forces defending Wake Island, 8 - 23 December, 1941, Doctor Shank, during the bombing and machine gunning of the camp hospital on 9 December, in complete disregard of his own safety, remained at his post and directed the evacuation of the sick and wounded, though himself in great danger from bombs, bullets, and flames. Doctor Shank's courageous action resulted in saving the lives of those not killed in the attack, and as well the salvaging of invaluable medical equipment. He then established a hospital for civilian patients in an empty magazine. Later when Commandant Fourteenth Naval District directed the evacuation of all but 250 of the civilian personnel, Doctor Shank volunteered to remain, and by his example inspired the five male nurses present to do likewise.
3. It is believed that Doctor Shank lost his life on Wake in October 1943, when a mass execution of remaining prisoners took place. Next of kin is Mrs. Ruby R. Shank, (wife) Brook, Indiana.

cc:
SecNav (2)
BuDocks
File

W. S. CUNNINGHAM.

2 May 1946

From: Commander, Naval Activities, Wake Island, 1941.

PROPOSED CITATION

"For extraordinary heroism in action against the enemy while associated with the naval defenses on WAKE ISLAND on 9 December, 1941. At about 1100, while in the camp hospital, during an intensive bombing and strafing attack in the course of which the hospital was completely destroyed and several persons therein killed or wounded, Doctor Shank remained at his post and supervised the evacuation of the patients and equipment. With absolute disregard for his own safety, and displaying great presence of mind, he was thus enabled to save those still living and to establish a new hospital in an empty magazine. Doctor Shank's display of outstanding courage and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

ENCLOSURE (A)

CSAT/jd

2 May 1946

From: Captain Winfield S. CUNNINGHAM, USN, (56074)
(Commander, Naval Activities, Wake Island, 1941)
To : Secretary of the Navy
(Board of Decorations and Medals)
Subj: Recommendation for the Bronze Star Medal - cases of
certain civilians serving with Naval forces defending
Wake Island, December 1941.

Encl: (A) Sample citation.

1. It is recommended that the Bronze Star Medal be awarded to the following civilians for services described below:

ELLIOTT, Richard Edward
FAIRY, William Lane
FROBERGER, Laurence George
GATES, George W.
HOKANSON, Walter Norbit
LANCASTER, Robert Hugh
RAY, William Henry, Jr.
RIEDEL, Chester Archibald
RUSSELL, Leal Henderson
STONE, Willis Charles
TETERS, Nathan Daniel.

2. The civilians listed above were members of the crew of the contractors who were engaged in the construction of the Naval Air Station, Wake Island. At the outbreak of war on 8 December 1941, through their superintendent, N. D. Teters, they reported to the Commander Naval Activities for duty in connection with the defense of the island. Throughout the defense from 8 to 23 December they assisted untiringly the labors of the military personnel in organizing working parties for moving guns, constructing shelters, mining the landing field and channel, providing food, water and transportation, in servicing airplanes and batteries. Their activities frequently exposed them to dangers to which otherwise they would have been less liable. They were an example to the men under and associated with them.

3. Information as to addresses and next to kin of the men listed in paragraph one is available in BuDocks.

cc: SecNav (2)
BuDocks
File

W. S. CUNNINGHAM

2 May 1946

From: Commander, Naval Activities, Wake Island, 1941.

PROPOSED CITATION

"For meritorious achievement in connection with operations against the enemy while serving with Naval defense forces on WAKE ISLAND, from 8 December to 23 December, 1941. RICHARD EDWARD ELLIOTT, WILLIAM LAKE FAIRY, LAURENCE GEORGE PROBERGER, GEORGE W. GATES, WALTER MORRIS HOKANSON, ROBERT HUGH LANCASTER, WILLIAM HENRY RAY, JR., CHARLES ARCHIBALD RIESEL, LEAL HENDERSON RUSSELL, WILLIE CHARLES STONE AND NATHAN DANIEL TETERS, members of the civilian construction crew on WAKE ISLAND, volunteered their services in assistance of the military personnel engaged in the defense of the island and rendered service of great value in organizing working parties and supervising them in moving guns, constructing shelters, mining the landing field and channel, providing food, water, and transportation and in servicing airplanes and batteries. Their activities often exposed them to greater danger than their associates and in their untiring and loyal efforts they were an example to the men around them. Their conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval service."

ENCLOSURE (A)

2 May 1946

From: Captain Winfield S. CUNNINGHAM, USN, (50074)
(Commander Naval Activities, Wake Island, 1941)
To : Secretary of the Navy
(Board of Decorations and Medals).
Subj: Recommendation for the Bronze Star Medal - cases of
certain civilians serving with Naval forces defending
Wake Island, December 1941.
Encl: (A) Sample citation.

1. It is recommended that the Bronze Star Medal be awarded to the following civilians for services described below:

GIBBONS, Fred Samuel
GIBBONS, George Fred
(son of above)
HIGDON, Ralph
JOHNSON, Malcolm D.
JONES, Rex Dean
MILLER, Don K.
McKINLEY, Jack Fritz
McGULLEY, Charles Edward
PETERSON, Murschel Lester
SMITH, Joe D.
SORENSEN, John P.
STEVENSON, Clinton L.
TRAGER, Harry.

2. The civilians listed above were members of the crew of the contractors who were engaged in the construction of the Naval Air Station, Wake Island. At the outbreak of war on 8 December 1941, they volunteered and attached themselves to Marine Fighting Plane Squadron 211. During the period 8 - 23 December they worked hard and indefatigably in assisting the military personnel in maintaining and servicing the planes. They shared their risks which were greater on the flying field than elsewhere. On the morning of 23 December, 1941, these men together with the squadron military personnel joined the ground defense forces in actual combat with the enemy who landed at about 0100. They were all either killed or wounded in action except McGulley who later died in prison camp.

2 May 1946

From: Commander, Naval Activities, Wake Island, 1941.

PROPOSED CITATION

"For heroic service in connection with operations against the enemy while serving in a volunteer capacity with a Marine Aircraft Squadron defending WAKE ISLAND on 23 December, 1941. FRED SAMUEL GIBBONS, GEORGE FRED GIBBONS, RALPH WISDON, MALCOLM D JOHNSON, REX DEAN JONES, DON E. MILLER, JACK FRITZ McKINLEY, CHARLES EDWARD McCULLY, HURSCHEL LESTER PETERSON, JOE D. SMITH, JOHN P. SORENSON, CLINTON L. STEVENSON AND HARRY YEAGER, members of the civilian construction crew on WAKE ISLAND, displayed outstanding courage in resolutely resisting an overwhelming enemy landing force in association with personnel of a marine fighting plane squadron, from about 0100 to 0900, with the result that all except one were killed or wounded. Their courageous conduct and sublime devotion to an assigned duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

ENCLOSURE "A"