

Public Information Office
U. S. Naval Hospital
Oakland 14, California

May 28, 1956

For Immediate Release:

5-56

LT Lloyd R. White, Jr., 33, critically injured when a series of explosions and fire wracked the USS POMODON at San Francisco Naval Shipyard on February 20, 1955, today received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for heroic conduct in attempting to save members of the crew trapped inside the submarine.

The medal, with accompanying citation signed by Secretary of the Navy Charles S. Thomas, was presented by RADM J. Q. Owsley, commanding officer of U. S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, where the lieutenant is still undergoing treatment.

"Immediately after the first explosion, LT White, Executive Officer of the submarine, assumed charge of damage control operations in the forward torpedo room without accepting the delay of donning a breathing apparatus," the citation read. "Although almost overcome by the dense fumes, he accomplished what could be done in fighting the fire with carbon dioxide flasks and then secured the bulkhead. Following this action, he organized a party to clear the watertight door between the forward battery and the control room which was obstructing all efforts to rescue two shipmates who were entrapped in the forward battery as a result of the explosion. Taking direct charge of the operation from the bridge and conning tower, he continually exposed himself to the dense smoke and noxious fumes in order to maintain communication with the party below. While proceeding from the bridge to the conning tower, LT White was critically injured by the blast of a second explosion. Lieutenant White's outstanding courage and inspiring actions throughout were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service," according to the citation.

more

LT White miraculously survived the disaster that claimed the lives of five of his shipmates. With severe burns and multiple injuries, including fractures of his left thigh and right upper arm, he remained in critical condition for several weeks. His badly damaged left leg failed to respond to treatment, and after fighting for months to save it, doctors at the Naval Hospital decided amputation was necessary. That was last September.

Today the lieutenant is walking on an artificial leg and hoping to remain on active duty. A career Navy man, he hopes to be assigned to an engineering job involving construction and repair of submarines. Oddly enough, he is a "second generation amputee." His father, Lloyd White, Sr., 7922 Sycamore Street, New Orleans, La., lost his leg as a result of a railroad accident in August 1942. An official on the Missouri Pacific railroad, he had worked all night and was inspecting the railroad yards in the half darkness of early dawn when a runaway box car hit him, crushing his left foot. Back at work 3 1/2 months later Mr. White is now a Texas-Pacific train master in New Orleans.

On hand to see LT White receive his decoration were his wife, Helen, and two sons, John 8, and Lloyd, III, 7. A third son, Stephen, 4, stayed at home with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Gunn, 940 Catalina Blvd., San Diego.

####