

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ARTHUR MURRAY PRESTON  
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

for service as 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 Commander of Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron THIRTY THREE while effecting the rescue of a Navy Pilot shot down in Wasile Bay, Halmahera Island, less than 200 yards from a strongly defended Japanese dock and supply area, September 16, 1944. Volunteering for a perilous mission unsuccessfully attempted by the pilot's squadron mates and a PBY plane, Lieutenant Commander (then Lieutenant) Preston led PT 489 and PT 363 through 60 miles of restricted, heavily mined waters. Twice turned back while running the gauntlet of fire from powerful coastal defense guns guarding the 11-mile strait at the entrance to the bay, he was again turned back by furious fire in the immediate area of the downed airman. Aided by an aircraft smoke screen, he finally succeeded in reaching his objective and, under vicious fire delivered at 150-yard range, took the pilot aboard and cleared the area, sinking a small hostile cargo vessel with 40-mm. fire during retirement. Increasingly vulnerable when covering aircraft were forced to leave because of insufficient fuel, Lieutenant Commander Preston raced PT Boats 489 and 363 at high speed for twenty minutes through shell-splashed water and across minefields to safety. Under continuous fire for two and one-half hours, Lieutenant Commander Preston successfully achieved a mission considered suicidal in its tremendous hazards and brought his boats through without personnel casualties and with but superficial damage from shrapnel. His exceptional daring and great personal valor enhance the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

(signed) Harry Truman