



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

LIEUTENANT CLYDE E. LASSEN
UNITED STATES NAVY

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 on 19 June 1968 as pilot and aircraft commander of a search and rescue helicopter, attached to Helicopter Support Squadron SEVEN, Detachment ONE, 18th AVIATION PSYRON, embarked in USS FREEDOM (LST-116), during operations against enemy forces in North Vietnam, Lieutenant Lassen, after midnight, to attempt the rescue of two downed aviators, Lieutenant (then Lieutenant, Junior Grade) Lassen skillfully piloted his aircraft over unknown and hostile terrain to a steep, tree-covered hill on which the survivors had been located. Although enemy fire was being directed at the helicopter, he initially landed in a clear area near the base of the hill, but, due to the dense undergrowth, the survivors could not reach the helicopter. With the aid of flare illumination, Lieutenant Lassen successfully accomplished a hover between two trees at the survivors' position. Illumination was abruptly lost as the last of the flares were expended, and the helicopter collided with a tree, commencing a sharp descent. Expertly righting his aircraft and maneuvering clear of the ground obstructions, Lieutenant Lassen remained in the area to make another rescue attempt. Again he was unsuccessful in effecting a rescue. Disregarding a dangerously low fuel gauge and significant damage to his aircraft, he was determined to make one final attempt. In spite of intensified enemy opposition and the loss of flare illumination, Lieutenant Lassen, fully aware of the dangers in clearly revealing his position to the enemy, turned on his landing lights and completed the landing. On this attempt, the survivors were able to make their way to the helicopter. En route to the coast, Lieutenant Lassen encountered and successfully evaded additional hostile antiaircraft fire and, with fuel for only five minutes of flight remaining, landed safely aboard USS JOUETT (LST-29). His conspicuous and daring actions, determination, and extraordinary heroism in the face of great risk sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

Clyde E. Lassen

Commander Clyde Everett Lassen
1942-1994

CDR Lassen became the first naval aviator and the fifth Navy man to be awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery in Vietnam. His list of decorations include the Air Medal; Presidential Unit Citation; Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze stars, and Vietnam Campaign Medal with device.

CDR Lassen's captain, LTJG LeRoy Cook, received the Navy Cross and the two air crewmen, Petty Officers Bruce Dallas and Don West, received the Silver Star.



L. LeRoy Cook

D. West

Bruce Dallas

J. H. H. H.

J. Burns

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