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Navy Cross Award Citation

MN1 Cecil Martin - US Navy

Citation:

For extraordinary heroism on the night of 21 November 1968 while serving with River Division 531 during riverine assault operations against enemy aggressor forces in the Mekong Delta region of the Republic of Vietnam. As Senior Boat Captain of a two-boat patrol, MN1 Martin was transiting from Rach Soi to Rach Gia, in conjunction with a concentrated patrol program adopted for the SEA LORDS interdiction campaign in the lower Delta, when his patrol came under heavy enemy attack on all sides. During the initial hail of fire, his cover boat received two direct rocket hits, wounding all personnel aboard and causing the craft to veer out of control and run aground directly in front of the enemy firing positions. MN1 Martin ordered his coxswain to reverse course and reenter the ambush area to rescue the cover boat's crew members. As his unit approached the stricken craft, MN1 Martin directed effective counterfire and, placing his boat between the beleaguered craft and the blazing enemy batteries, took command of the precarious rescue effort. While affording exemplary leadership and inspiration to the members of his surprised and battered patrol element, he directed the major fire-suppression efforts of his gunners, personally manning and firing a machine gun at crucial intervals. Additionally, MN1 Martin rendered first aid to casualties, extinguished a fire in the beached craft, advised his commanding officer in the Naval Operations Center of the seriousness of the situation, and coordinated the transfer of wounded personnel to his unit. Through his courageous and determined fighting spirit, he succeeded in safely extracting his men, undoubtedly saving numerous lives. His great personal valor in the face of heavy and sustained enemy fire was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.