

JANUARY 24, 1944

PURPLE HEART AWARDS GIVEN TO PARENTS OF
FIVE SULLIVAN BROTHERS LOST ON USS JUNEAU

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Sullivan, 98 Adams Street, Waterloo, Iowa, today were presented with the Purple Hearts and certificates, awarded posthumously by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, in the name of the President of the United States, to their five sons, who perished together when the cruiser USS JUNEAU was sunk in the South Pacific, off the Solomons, November 13, 1942, in the Guadalcanal campaign.

Rear Admiral Clark H. Woodward, United States Navy, Retired, Chief of the Industrial Incentive Division, Navy Department, made the presentation at his office, 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Katherine Mary Sullivan, widow of Albert Leo Sullivan, 2228 Hawthorne Street, Waterloo, only one of the brothers who was married, was unable to be present at the ceremony and requested that the Purple Heart awarded her late husband be given her parents-in-law.

Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan and their daughter, Specialist (Recruiter), Third Class, Genevieve Sullivan, U.S.N.R., visited more than 200 manufacturing plants, shipyards and concerns producing weapons and war materials. These tours, made at the request of the Sullivans -- who remembered that the boys always told them to "keep your chins up" -- were under the auspices of the Industrial Incentive Division. They urged all workers to "carry on" so that Marines, Sailors and Soldiers might have all the weapons they need for victory. They spoke to more than a million American workers in 65 cities, as well as reaching additional millions over the radio. The father of the boys is a railroad freight conductor in Iowa.

Commander Samuel J. Singer, U.S.N.R., Executive Officer of the Industrial Incentive Division, who made arrangements for today's ceremony, recalled that when the Naval officer told the boys' father that they were lost in the Pacific in battle, the father said:

"I've got a freight train that's got to keep moving. The boys always said: 'Keep your chin up and keep plugging.' So -- despite this heavy blow -- the trains can't be delayed."

The Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, forwarded the Purple Hearts and certificates for presentation. It recalled that the Secretary of the Navy, in accordance with General Order 186 of January 21, 1943, is authorized to make such awards in the name of the President of the United States, to those in the service after December 6, 1941, who are killed in action or die as a direct result of wounds received in action with an enemy of the United States.

The Purple Heart, a decoration originated by General George Washington in the Revolutionary War, is also given those wounded in action with the enemy, who survive combat.

The five Sullivan brothers were: George Thomas, Gunner's Mate, Second Class, U.S.N.R., 28; Francis Henry, Coxswain, U.S.N.R., 26;

Joseph Eugene, Seaman, Second Class, U.S.N.R., 24; Madison Abel, Seaman, Second Class, U.S.N.R., 23; and Albert Leo, Seaman, Second Class, U.S.N.R., 20.

The brothers were shipmates on the USS JUNEAU. The quintette enlisted simultaneously at Des Moines, Iowa, January 3, 1942, and went together to the Great Lakes, Illinois, Naval Training Station. The Navy granted their request to do duty aboard the same vessel.

Two of the boys -- George and Francis -- had previously served four-year enlistments in the Navy and were entitled to the American Defense Service Medal with Fleet Clasp and the Good Conduct Medal, in addition to these, which all five had earned: American Area Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Area Campaign Medal and Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal with two bronze stars.

The new destroyer, USS THE SULLIVANS, named for the brothers, was launched at San Francisco, California, April 4, 1943.

(Photographs are available in the Photographic Section, Office of Public Relations.)
