

ROOSEVELT GIVES MARITIME MEDAL

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

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RECEIVING NEW MARITIME MEDAL



Edwin F. Cheney Jr. of Yeadon, Pa., is decorated by President Roosevelt with the Maritime Distinguished Service Medal in the presence of Vice Admiral Emory S. Land, Maritime Commission chairman. Cheney rescued several shipmates trapped on a torpedoed tanker.

Associated Press Wirephoto

ROOSEVELT GIVES MARITIME MEDAL

He Decorates First Seaman to
Win New Hero Award for
Merchant Seamen

LIKENS VALOR TO NAVY'S

E. F. Cheney, 25, Swam Under
Blazing Oil to Rescue Sail-
ors of Torpedoed Tanker

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 8—President Roosevelt personally presented to Edward F. Cheney of Yeadon, Pa., today the first Maritime Distinguished Service Medal and declared that it was "grand" that the nation now recognized that the valor of its sailors aboard merchant ships and tankers was as essential as valor on fighting ships.

Mr. Cheney, 25 years old, slim, and bashful, who was quartermaster on the tanker John D. Gill which was torpedoed on March 12, received the following citation:

"For heroism above and beyond his call of duty during enemy attack when he released and launched a life raft from a sinking and burning ship and manoeuvred it through a pool of burning oil to clear water by swimming under water, coming up only to breathe. Although he had incurred severe burns about the face and arms in the action, he then guided four of his shipmates to the raft, and swam to and rescued two others who were injured and unable to help themselves.

"His extraordinary courage and disregard for his own safety in thus rescuing his shipmates will be an enduring inspiration to seamen of the United States Merchant Marine everywhere.

The President shook hands with the young seaman, who has twice been on tankers torpedoed by enemy submarines. In the last sinking, following the Gill episode, he suffered a broken rib, but is now ready to return to sea.

The medal consists of a sixteen-pointed star such as appears on a compass card, surmounted with an eagle and crossed anchors and suspended by a red, white and blue ribbon. The President pointed out that a gold rosette, bearing the same basic sixteen-pointed star design, accompanied the medal.

When the time came to pin the medal on, the President fumbled with the clasp several times, then exclaimed:

"I still can't get the thing undone."

Rear Admiral Emory S. Land, Maritime Commission chairman, was asked to release the catch, but could not, explaining that his fingers "are all thumbs too." Finally, Vice Admiral Arthur F. Fairfield, retired naval officer and chairman of the award committee, got the medal ready for presentation.

The President congratulated Paul Manship, the sculptor who designed the medal.