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

MAJOR JOHN L. SMITH
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and heroic achievement in aerial combat above and
beyond the call of duty as Commanding Officer of Marine Fighting Squadron TWO
TWENTY-THREE, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon
Islands Area, August-September, 1942. Repeatedly risking his life in aggressive
and daring attacks, Major Smith led his squadron against a determined force,
greatly superior in numbers, personally shooting down sixteen Japanese planes
between August 21 and September 15, 1942. In spite of the limited combat
experience of many of the pilots of this squadron, they achieved the notable
record of a total of eighty-three enemy aircraft destroyed in this period, mainly
attributable to the thorough training under Major Smith and to his intrepid and
inspiring leadership. His bold tactics and indomitable fighting spirit and the
valiant and zealous fortitude of the men of his command not only rendered the
enemy's attacks ineffective and costly to them but contributed to the security
of our advance base. His loyal and courageous devotion to duty sustain and
enhance the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

/S/ FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT