



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