

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

15 July 1942.

Dear Sir:

Over the week-end I returned to Washington from the Southwest Pacific.

My Washington office handed me a sealed letter from GHQ, Southwest Pacific Area. The letter included a copy of an original General Order No. 12 designating the Silver Star to be awarded me for participation in operation in the vicinity of Port Moresby and Salamaua, New Guinea, on June 9, 1942.

General MacArthur had told me that citations were being prepared only a few moments before I was detached from him for assignment, and a copy was handed me by a messenger at the airport I shall always be proud that General MacArthur considered me, even though not a member of the Army Air Corps, worthy of some commendation because I volunteered as he puts it for a "combat mission over hostile possessions in New Guinea."

After my experience with the Air Corps in the Southwest Pacific it would be hard for me to conceive of any honor I would rather have than a decoration which I had earned as a member of the armed forces in service with the gallant officers and men in this theatre of operations.

But my very brief service with these men and its experience of what they do and sacrifice makes me all the more sensitive that I should not and could not accept a citation of recognition for the little part I played for a short time in learning and facing with them the problems they encounter all the time.

The "coolness" for which the General commends me was only the reflection of my utter confidence in the men with whom I was flying.

Alone and forced to quit formation, the disabled plane and crew were saved by the superior training and intelligence of an American pilot, and Australian co-pilot and other members of the crew who would make any other man's service dim by comparison. Watching the fighting crew of my ship save their crippled plane despite interdeption by hostile fighters outnumbering us, burned into my mind knowledge of concrete conditons which you can make sure I shall use to the best of my ability in the service of my country.

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The Adjutant General

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Please accept this expression in the spirit in which I have written it and inform the proper authorities that I cannot in good conscience accept the decoration.

Sincerely,

Lyndon B. Johnson,
Lt. Commander, U. S. N. R.

The Adjutant General,
The War Department,
Washington, D. C.