

# LBJ's medal for valour 'was sham'

Julian Borger in Washington  
The Guardian, Friday 6 July 2001 05.38 EDT

For most of his political life, Lyndon B Johnson wore a second world war military decoration for valour under fire despite never having seen combat, an investigation broadcast on CNN yesterday revealed. LBJ was awarded the Silver Star, the third-highest US combat medal, for a 1942 fact-finding mission over the Pacific while he was a Texas congressman and an acting lieutenant commander in the navy.

The citation, issued in the name of General Douglas MacArthur, said the plane, a B-26 bomber, was "intercepted by eight hostile fighters" and that Johnson "evidenced coolness".

In fact, according to surviving members of the crew, the plane developed mechanical problems before reaching its target and never came under fire. No other crew member received a medal for the mission.

The biographer of LBJ, Robert Dallek, said the medal was the outcome of a deal with Gen MacArthur, under which Johnson was honoured in return for a pledge "that he would lobby the president, FDR, to provide greater resources for the southwest Pacific theatre".

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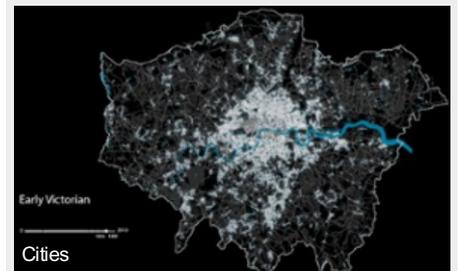
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