

Serial 00403

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET  
AIRCRAFT SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE

10 May 1943

**From:** The Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force.  
**To :** The Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force.

**Subject:** Recommendations for awards, cases of Major John W. Mitchell, U.S.A.A.F., Captain Thomas G. Laphier, Jr., 70th Fighter Squadron, First Lieutenant Heaby F. Holmes, 330th Fighter Squadron, and First Lieutenant Rex T. Barber, 339th Fighter Squadron.

**Enclosures:** (A) C.O. MAG-12 secret ltr. KV12/P15-1/jjf, dated April 19, 1943, with ComAirSols Endorsement, secret serial 0010, dated April 21 1943.  
(B) C.O. MAG-12 secret ltr. KV12/P15-1/jfm, dated April 20, 1943, with ComAirSols Endorsement dated April 22, 1943.  
(C) C.O. MAG-12 secret ltr. KV12/P15-1/jfm, dated April 20 1943, with ComAirSols Endorsement dated April 22, 1943.  
(D) C.O. MAG-12 secret ltr. KV12/P15-1/jfm, dated April 20, 1943, with ComAirSols Endorsement dated April 22, 1943.

1. Because Enclosures(A), (B), (C) and (D) contain recommendations for awards for participation in the same action they are consolidated.

2. Forwarded.

3. The action report of this engagement indicates that the subject officers were participants in a flight consisting of sixteen (16) P-38 Airplanes. The Force which it intercepted consisted of two bombers and six zeros. The navigation, interception and conduct of the attack were outstanding.

4. Under the circumstances and lacking definite information that the Japanese were struck a blow which will seriously affect their war effort more than the loss of the airplanes destroyed, Commander Aircraft, South Pacific Force is of the opinion that the Navy Crosses are a more appropriate award than the medals of Honor. Should it appear at a later date that the Japanese war effort received a serious set back as a result of this action, award of the Medals of Honor are then recommended.

AUDREY W. FITCH

Copy to  
C.O. MAG-12.  
ComAirSols.

A TRUE COPY:

/s/ W. D. Sampson  
/t/ W. D. SAMPSON,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

A TRUE COPY:

/s/ W. C. Flewollen, Jr.  
/t/ W. C. FLEWOLLEN, Jr.,  
Major, OSG  
A/C of S. A-1 Sec

Classification changed to:

*Unclassified*  
by authority of CS, USAF

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*Serial 3 to Serial 17*