

Lieutenant Colonel William A. Shomo distinguished himself by making unique and exceptionally meritorious contributions to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

On 11 January 1945, then Captain Shomo and his wingman were flying a photographic mission in their P-51 Mustang aircraft when they encountered a force of thirteen Japanese aircraft. Although outnumbered thirteen-to-two, they attacked the Japanese bomber and 12 Japanese fighters and engaged them in aerial combat. In the ensuing air battle, Captain Shomo's wingman shot down three of the enemy fighters.

Captain Shomo attained victories over six of the Kawasaki fighters on six firing passes. In the course of the sixth victory, his aircraft was damaged, the canopy shot off, and he was wounded. Despite his wounds, the condition of his aircraft and its critical fuel state, Captain Shomo attacked the Japanese bomber. The victory over the Betty bomber was his record-breaking seventh victory in a single sortie.

For his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life and above and beyond the call of duty, Colonel Shomo, a Pennsylvania native, was awarded the Medal of Honor.

After World War II, Colonel Shomo returned home to Pittsburgh. At the request of the Air Force, Colonel Shomo interviewed over one thousand pilots with a view toward establishment of an Air National Guard fighter unit in Pittsburgh. From 1946 through 1948, Colonel Shomo applied his outstanding leadership toward organization of the first Pennsylvania Air National Guard unit in Pittsburgh. His efforts contributed immensely to the successful recognition of the 146th Fighter Squadron at Greater Pittsburgh Airport.

In 1948, Colonel Shomo returned to active duty in the Air Force. He retired after a distinguished military career in 1968.

Colonel Shomo's gallantry in combat establishes him as a true American hero and a great Pennsylvanian. His leadership in organizing the 146th Fighter Squadron at Greater Pittsburgh Airport marks him as one of the founding fathers of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Colonel Shomo reflect the highest credit upon himself, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and make him truly deserving of induction into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.