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MANAGEMENT, AND CREDIT



Salud O. Carbajal
24th District, California

2331 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3601

125 E. DE LA GUERRA STREET
SUITE 203B
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
(805) 730-1710

1411 MARSH STREET, SUITE 205
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805) 546-8348

CARBAJAL.HOUSE.GOV

September 27, 2023

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretary Kendall,

I am once again writing to request the Air Force consider upgrading Colonel Philip J. Conran's Air Force Cross to an Air Force Medal of Honor. Please see the attached supporting documents compiled by Colonel Conran, which include a newly found memo from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

On October 6, 1969, Major Conran led a rescue mission in Laos after the lead helicopter in the formation was shot down by enemy forces. Colonel Conran demonstrated extraordinarily sound judgment as he led this mission and displayed unwavering bravery and complete disregard for his personal safety to ensure the successful rescue of all U.S. personnel at the site of the incident.

It is my understanding six Medal of Honor recommendations were submitted by the Army and Air Force for actions during the Vietnam War that took place in Laos or Cambodia. At the time, none of the individuals received this honor because of the classified nature of the locations. Of the six, Colonel Conran is the only veteran not to be upgraded to the Medal of Honor. The mission and its location have since been declassified and he deserves to be properly recognized for his courageous and selfless actions.

The most recent was Army Specialist 5 Dennis M. Fujii who was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Biden on June 27, 2022. At the ceremony President Biden said, "more than 50 years have passed — 50 years — since the jungles of Vietnam where, as young men, these soldiers first proved their mettle. But time has not diminished their astonishing bravery, their selflessness in putting the lives of others ahead of their own, and the gratitude that we, as a nation, owe them." President Biden's words also apply to Colonel Conran. It has been 54 years since Colonel Conran saved the lives of fellow U.S. soldiers by risking his own, but the heroics of his actions have not diminished.

I ask that you please review all attached materials and give this case your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.O. Carbajal".

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress