

December 4, 2019

General David L. Goldfein
USAF Chief of Staff
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

SUBJECT: SAFPC Advisory to AFBCMR Case – Application for Correction of Military Records (DD Form 149) For Colonel Philip J. Conran BC-2018-01673 - Attached

General Goldfein,

I wish to call your attention to what appears to be a travesty. For several years from 1960 through the early 70s, the U.S. Government (CIA) with US military support was engaged in secret full frontal warfare with North Vietnam in Laos. It was a brutal ill advised and ill executed mess. See "Shadow War" and "Secret War". On 6 October 1969 in Laos, Major Philip Conran and his crews were engaged by an enemy force of some 300 troops. With two CH-3 helicopters down and crew members wounded Major Conran, although wounded himself, assumed command and for six hours directed munitions resources and air power instrumental in saving the lives of eight U.S. airmen and some 40 allied troops. Conran was recommended by his commanders for the Medal of Honor – President Nixon and the Air Force denied it because, "We are not in Laos". The award was downgraded to the Air Force Cross and, recently denied again on review by your staff. Time is short – Conran is now 82 years old – it is time he receives the just re-cognition he deserves – The Medal of Honor.

I was aircraft commander of the first HH-3 Jolly Green Rescue helicopter to arrive on the scene. We were there for some four hours waiting for an opportunity to attempt a rescue. Through radio contact/exchange I listened as the situation deteriorated (more enemy arriving etc.) and as it became obvious that should a rescue not be made Conran and his troops would certainly die overnight, I made the decision to attempt a rescue landing on Moung Phine Airfield. I was forced to depart due to an intense barrage by enemy automatic armor piercing weapons causing severe damage to my aircraft.

Note: Other Jolly Green HH3s were in the area; however a decision was made to bring in much more capable HH53s with special weapons, gas and more firepower. The latter aircraft were able to suppress enemy fire and make the largest rescue (by number) of the war. While decisions were being made Conran continued the ground fight calling in airstrikes around his position, marshalling dwindling munitions and protecting his troops. Sir, let's get this done.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CDL', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charles D. Langham
LTC USAF, Ret., SS, DFC