

June 6, 2017

Secretary of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary

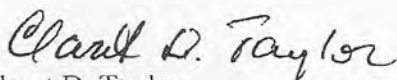
I was the Mission Commander for the troop deployment in Laos on October 6, 1969 and the Aircraft Commander on Knife 61, the first helicopter that was shot down. We were in the process of being overrun by enemy forces when Conran, realizing we had little hope of surviving without additional troops, made the decision to assist even though he knew his chance of survival was minimal. He could have exited the area because of the extreme high risk and let us fend for ourselves and nobody would have questioned his decision but he didn't. This were the willingness to sacrifice to save your comrades separates those who deserve the Medal of Honor and those who do not. I know I lived the see another day because Conran risked his life to save me and my crew.

There are two additional heroic actions by Conran that should be recorded over and above those described in the 1969 original Medal of Honor Recommendation.

1. Our mission consisted of five H-3 troop carrying helicopters and one H-1 helicopter, designated for any possible rescue action. Prior to Conran making his decision to come to our aide he requested the H-1 initiate an approach to recover my crew. This request was refused by the aircraft commander stating "the area was too dangerous and he was low on fuel" Conran told him to return to base if he was not going to attempt a rescue.
2. When the rescue H-53 landed right before dusk after four A-1 aircraft saturated the area with "sawdust" (gas), the 46 indigenous troops got to the helicopter's rear deck first preventing us from gaining entry. Conran lead us around the helicopter thinking we could enter through the side door. Unfortunately , the H-53 lower Dutch-door was closed and Col Silve, who was wounded in the back, could not climb in. Conran, even though he had a severe leg wound, immediately got down on his hand and knees to allow Silva to use his back as a stepping stone to gain entrance. The rest of us also used Conran's back to successfully climb in and then a rescue PJ pulled him in right before the helicopter took off.

I think it was a travesty that politics preventing Col Conran from receiving the Medal of Honor soon after the mission. We were In a place we should not have been, doing what our country asked us to do, yet we were treated different from those in open combat when it came to recognizing our accomplishments. In war some secret missions can't be discussed until enough time has passed so as not to embarrass the nation. In this case, there is no excuse not to bestow this honor on a deserving warrior that was willing to give his life for his comrades.

If requested, I will be honored to verbally present my views as the Mission Commander to the Air Force Decorations Board if you pass Congressman Salud Carbajal (D, CA 23<sup>rd</sup>) letter to them for their review.



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