

October 19, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Kendall,

I wrote General Brown (copy attached) several months ago but have not received a reply so I am now asking for your support to upgrade Philip J. Conran's Air Force Cross (AFC) to the Medal of Honor (MOH) for his heroic action in Laos on 6 October 1969.

Our California Congressional Representatives Lois Capps and Salud Carbajal, a fellow Marine, authored four Bills (HR 4280 - 2015, HR 4920 - 2018, HR 2330 - 2019 and HR 1190 – 2021) supporting the upgrade for then Major Conran. Their reasons were because they and all of us sincerely believe his heroic acts on the 1969 CIA mission deserves the upgrade. We also believe his original MOH Recommendation was downgraded in 1970 because the action took place in Laos and our Government would not acknowledge we were conducting combat operations in an area that was in violation of the existing SEA Treaty.

I, a Marine Corps Vietnam combat veteran, am completely baffled by the reluctance of the Air Force to correct this injustice. Conran's heroic actions are documented and supported by his original MOH Recommendation, all living downed crewmen, and many military and CIA personnel who supported or had knowledge of the mission. The facts fully support him saving the lives of 54 military personnel.

Conran's 23 March 2020 DD Form 149 package was recently reviewed by SAF/MRBP and their recommendation was to deny his request. Unfortunately, we believe their decision was based principally on two issues: 1. the SAF disapproval in 2015. We state that decision was based on insufficient evidence since, according to the AFMPC, his official AF MOH paperwork was destroyed sometime before 2013. Since then we have accumulated a great deal of evidence showing exactly what took place during the secret mission. 2. The length of time between the 1969 mission and our request. This is unacceptable. Injustice should be corrected no matter when the action took place.

There are approximately 66 living MOH recipient with only one from the Air Force. General Brown stated "People only aspire to be what they can see." Conran's action as a pilot in the air and as an infantry commander on the ground qualifies him as a true Air Force hero. I feel it would raise morale for the troops knowing that past errors are corrected no matter how long ago the action took place. I urge you to support our quest to honor him and I stand ready to personally discuss this matter with you. My phone number is 805 452-9905 and email is captainpeterson1941@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Peterson
Captain, USMCR (fmr)

