

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20510

February 12, 2025

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to you today with great respect and a shared commitment to honoring the courageous individuals who embody our nation's values. In this spirit, we urge you to award the Medal of Honor to Major James Capers, Jr., a Marine veteran whose unparalleled bravery and patriotism deserve the highest recognition.

Major Capers is a trailblazer, a hero, and a symbol of the enduring principles of service and sacrifice. Born into poverty in South Carolina during the "Jim Crow" era, Major Capers overcame incredible adversity and systemic barriers to become a pioneer in the United States Marine Corps. He was the first African American to lead a Marine Reconnaissance company and to receive a battlefield commission.

Sworn testimony from members of Team Broadminded, including Private First Class Henry J. Stanton, Staff Sargent Ronald R. Yerman, and Major James Capers, Jr., supported by a statement from Lieutenant Colonel Rehfus, the Battalion Executive Officer of the 3d Force Reconnaissance Battalion overseeing Major Capers unit, account for the following. From March 31 to April 3, 1967, in Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, Lieutenant James Capers and his Force Reconnaissance Marines were attached to an infantry company tasked with locating and destroying a North Vietnamese regimental unit near Phu Loc. On the final day, after intense firefights that resulted in many enemy losses, Capers was ordered to lead his team back through previously cleared trails, a decision he deemed ill-conceived and dangerous but was forced to follow.

As Capers' team moved through the jungle, they were ambushed by a numerically superior enemy force. The attack, initiated with claymore mines, inflicted devastating injuries on all eight Marines and killed their war dog, King. Despite sustaining severe shrapnel wounds, which ripped open his abdomen and broke his leg, Capers took control, halting the enemy's advance and directing air, artillery, and mortar strikes dangerously close to his position.

Bleeding heavily, Capers led two Marines against the enemy while ordering the rest of his Marines to retrograde to a landing zone for medical evacuation. For nearly an hour, he engaged the enemy with his rifle and grenades, even as he suffered additional bullet wounds to his legs. Once the enemy was suppressed and his team reached the landing zone, Capers ordered his injured Marines, equipment, and King's remains onto the helicopter. When the enemy attacked again, Capers returned to the fight despite the Corpsman's attempts to restrain him, holding off the enemy with his rifle until his rounds were exhausted and then with his pistol.

When the enemy retreated, Capers, who was critically injured and unable to walk, was helped aboard the helicopter for all to extract. As the overloaded aircraft struggled to take off, Capers, prioritizing his team's safety, attempted to sacrifice himself by jumping from the helicopter. The crew chief, however, pulled him back on board.

While Major Capers was awarded the Bronze Star, later upgraded to a Silver Star, for his heroic actions, several attempts have been made to upgrade the award to the Medal of Honor, including one from his former Executive Officer, Lieutenant Colonel James R. Rehfus, and several congressional requests. The 3d Marine Division Commanding General, Major General Bruno A. Hochmuth, USMC, initiated the idea behind a Medal of Honor recommendation after he met with Capers and his team in the hospital and learned of the actions undertaken.

Major Capers was also a central figure in the Marine Corps' highly successful "Ask a Marine" recruiting campaign, inspiring countless young Americans to serve. His story of triumph over adversity and unyielding dedication to his country continues to resonate with generations of Americans. Tragically, despite these remarkable achievements, Major Capers has yet to receive the Medal of Honor.

We firmly believe that Major James Capers, Jr., has met the stringent criteria for the Medal of Honor. His selfless actions, leadership, courage, and initiative uphold the highest traditions of the United States Armed Forces. The exceptional valor displayed by Major Capers during his missions in the Republic of Vietnam from March 31 to April 3, 1967, serves as a shining example for all servicemen and women, and it is deserving of the highest recognition.

We kindly request that you consider this recommendation and take the necessary steps to award Major James Capers, Jr. the Medal of Honor.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to honor one of America's greatest patriots properly.

Sincerely,



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Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress



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Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator



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Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



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Ted Budd  
United States Senator



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Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



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Tim Sheehy  
United States Senator



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Tim Burchett  
Member of Congress



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Gary J. Palmer  
Member of Congress



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Joe Wilson  
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Christopher H. Smith  
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Sheri Biggs  
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Diana Harshbarger  
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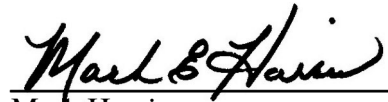
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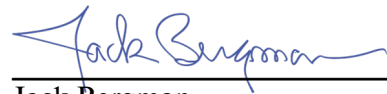
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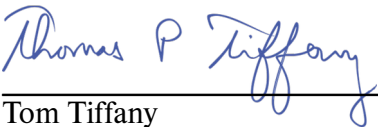
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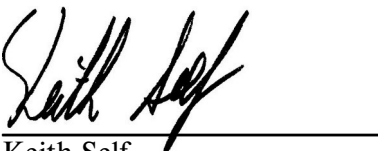
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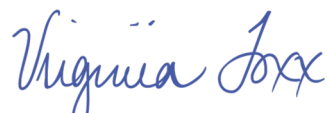


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United States Senator