

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 2, 2011

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to bring your attention to a proposal to award Chaplain (CPT) Emil J. Kapaun the Medal of Honor. We fully support this effort and request your official consent to move this award forward.

We recently offered legislation in both the House and Senate to waive the statutory time limitation for the award of the Medal of Honor to Father Kapaun. In order to move forward on the legislative measures, we need you to convey your support and concurrence with the Senior Army Decorations Board's determination to the Committees on Armed Services in the Senate and the House.

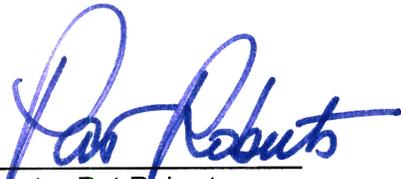
The campaign to recognize Father Kapaun's heroic contributions began several years ago. In response to a request by former Congressman Todd Tiahrt in 2009 to review Father Kapaun's record, the former Secretary of the Army Peter Geren confirmed that his actions in combat operations and as a prisoner of war in Korea warrant award of the Medal of Honor. Please find the response enclosed.

As a fellow Kansan, you may already be familiar with the story of Father Kapaun, who was born in Pilsen, Kansas, 1916. During the Korean War, Father Kapaun served as a chaplain of the 8th Cavalry Regiment of the First Army Division. Amidst the devastating Battle of Unsan, Kapaun stayed on the battlefield, dragging wounded soldiers to safety and attending to their injuries. He was taken prisoner along with other American soldiers and served his comrades by escaping to steal food from nearby farms to bring back to starving prisoners. He cared for sick soldiers, washed them, shared his food with them, and inspired them with his unflinching faith and acts of generosity until his death in May 1951. Fellow soldiers who benefitted or witnessed the many examples of Father Kapaun's service shared the stories of his heroism after their release. One soldier's description of Father Kapaun's courage is most fitting: "Father Kapaun's courage had the softness of velvet and the strength of iron."

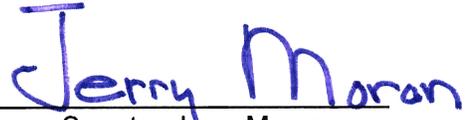
Father Kapaun was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in the Battle of Unsan. It is appropriate to further recognize his courage, strength, and service to his fellow prisoners by awarding him the Medal of Honor. Congress stands ready to take action and award this honor to Father Kapaun but awaits consent and advice from your department. We appreciate your time and attention to this important matter.

With every best wish,

Sincerely,



Senator Pat Roberts



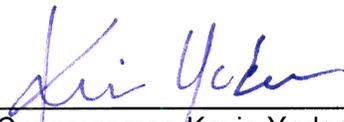
Senator Jerry Moran



Congressman Tim Huelskamp



Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins



Congressman Kevin Yoder



Congressman Mike Pompeo

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable John McHugh, Secretary of the Army



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, DC

SEP 19 2009

RECEIVED SEP 29 2009

The Honorable Todd Tiaht  
155 North Market, Suite 400  
Wichita, KS 67202

Dear Representative Tiaht:

I am writing in response to your request to upgrade Chaplain (CPT) Emil J. Kapaun's Distinguished Service Cross to the Medal of Honor.

Title 10, United States Code, Section 1130, Consideration of Military Decorations Not Previously Submitted in Timely Fashion, directs that, upon request of a Member of Congress, the Secretary of the Army shall review a proposal for the award or presentation of a decoration (or upgrading of a decoration) that is not otherwise authorized to be presented or awarded due to time limitations established by law or policy. Based upon such review, the Secretary of the Army shall make a determination as to the merits of approving the award or presentation of the decoration.

The Army reviewed a proposal for the award of the Medal of Honor to Chaplain (CPT) Emil J. Kapaun under the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, Section 1130. In accordance with our normal procedures, the Senior Army Decorations Board reviewed the case and submitted it to me with its recommendation. After giving this request careful, personal consideration, I have determined that Chaplain (CPT) Kapaun's actions in combat operations and as a prisoner of war in Korea warrant award of the Medal of Honor.

A similar letter has been sent to the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the Committees on Armed Services in the House and the Senate. A draft proposal for the time waiver legislation is attached for your consideration.

This brave Soldier clearly distinguished himself by his courageous actions. The Army and our nation are forever grateful for his heroic service. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of this brave American.

Sincerely,

Pete Geren