

Mr. Justin D. LeHew
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Dear General Keane,

The reason I am writing directly to you is because you, Philip Conran, and President Donald Trump have something in common – all were students at Fordham University and I feel you have the ability to rise above the Air Force bureaucratic roadblocks and assist us in correcting a 1970 unjust decision.

Phil was nominated for the Air Force Medal of Honor (MOH) for his actions on a 1969 CIA mission in Laos. However, on 20 May 1970, he was awarded the Air Force Cross. General Lucius D. Clay Jr., who presided at the ceremony, stated the MOH was initially approved but then downgraded because the combat action took place in Laos and President Nixon was on record stating the United States had no troops in Laos and the action was in violation of the existing Southeast Asia Treaty.

Phil did not contest the downgrade and never pursued the issue at all until four decades later after he read where Richard Etchberger's AFC was upgraded by President Obama in 2010 for his 1968 combat action in Laos, as well as multiple awards of the DSC were upgraded by the Army in support of operations in Laos, as a matter of fact, all were upgraded to the MOH from this time period, except for Phil's. In 2013, Major General Philip J. Conley, USAF (Ret), a strong supporter for Phil's upgrade, was informed by the Air Force Military Personnel Center that the paperwork covering the MOH recommendation was destroyed. Phil's congressional representatives have supported the upgrade with five House Resolutions but the Air Force Board of Correction of Military Records refuses to favorably recommend an upgrade even after a 2023 research paper by Tom Briggs, a retired CIA official, showed there were six MOH RECOMMENDATIONS submitted during the Nixon Administration for heroic action in Laos or Cambodia after Nixon's Foreign Policy was announced on 25 July 1969 stating the United States had no troops in Laos or Cambodia. All six were rejected. We state they were all downgraded for political and not for merit-based reasons. Since then the five army recommendations have been upgraded with the last one in 2022. Phil's still awaits a favorable recommendation from the Air Force.

I am asking for your support. I have attached a short one page overview on what took place during the mission. Additional documents may be viewed on <http://philipconran.com>.

With sincere admiration and regard,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin D. LeHew', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Justin D. LeHew - Past National Commander, Legion Of Valor