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March 8, 2012

The Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Mabus:

Thank you for taking the time yesterday to discuss Marine Corps Sergeant Rafael Peralta and the Navy's interest in resubmitting his Medal of Honor nomination. Per our conversation, I am providing you with the evidence previously unavailable to investigators, including the pathology report that confirms Sergeant Peralta pulled the grenade into his body and video showing there is no injury to his left leg.

The pathology report and video, both of which are reliable sources of information to assist you in the formal review and submission process, were not taken into account when former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made the decision to downgrade Sergeant Peralta's Medal of Honor to the Navy Cross. The pathology report emphatically states based on the evidence that Sergeant Peralta "in fact reached for the grenade and pulled it under his body."

A major factor in the decision to deny Sergeant Peralta the Medal of Honor was the conclusion that the grenade detonated one to three feet from his left knee and not underneath him, even though a fragment of the grenade fuse was recovered from the flak jacket, center mass (photo provided). The video shows Peralta, being pulled through a doorway several feet from the area of detonation, with severe injury to the lower abdomen, and no injury to his left leg.

Immediately following our conversation, my staff also communicated with Corporal Robert Reynolds. Corporal Reynolds was one of several Marines fighting alongside Sergeant Peralta in Fallujah, and he was present at the moment the grenade was on the floor, and he witnessed Sergeant Peralta pull the grenade to his body. He said, as other eye-witnesses have attested, that Sergeant Peralta scooped the grenade and absorbed the blast. Corporal Reynolds says the grenade was not one to three feet from Sergeant Peralta's left knee when it detonated, stating: "if the grenade was by his knee, I would not be here today. Peralta pulled it to his body."

If there are any questions regarding the video, I would encourage you to review the floor plans included in the original package of information, which can be identified through the video

and photographs of the scene. In one photo that I am providing, which shows the exact area where the grenade detonated, and the direction Sergeant Peralta was pulled to the doorway, pieces of the same debris that are visible near the doorway in the photo, are also visible in the video. Also, the source of this video, later acquired by the History Channel and provided to the Peralta family's legal representation, can confirm its origin. If necessary, I would encourage you to confirm its origin—and I am available to initiate the proper contact. Corporal Reynolds also confirms that the individual in question is Sergeant Peralta, should investigators raise the issue of identity.

Mr. Secretary, after reviewing the pathology report and video, and considering them alongside the original review material, there is absolutely no question that Sergeant Peralta pulled the grenade into his body, absorbed the blast with his upper body, and saved the lives of his fellow Marines. For his actions and sacrifice, Sergeant Peralta deserves the Medal of Honor and I commend the Navy for initiating a review of the information in the interest of resubmitting Sergeant Peralta's nomination.

If you have any questions or require assistance at any stage of your review, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duncan Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Duncan" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Hunter".

Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress