

**BRONZE STAR FOR SERVICE**

**RECOMMENDATION FOR**



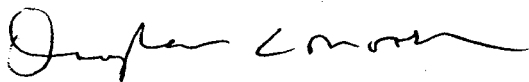
**U.S. ARMY SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS**

**CHARLES EARLE CRAFTS**

LTC Stephen Harmon  
Assistant Chief, Army Awards Board  
U.S. Army Human Resources Command

Contained herein is our recommendation for a Bronze Star Medal recognizing the service of SP4 Charles Earle Crafts during his extended period as a Prisoner of War in Vietnam.

- **Tab 1.** This contains the DA Form 638 recommending the Bronze Star Medal for service.
- **Tab 2.** Included here is vital information provided by Colonel Donald L. Price, USMC (Ret), author of **The First Marine Captured in Vietnam - A Biography of Colonel Donald G. Cook**. During his five years of extensive research, Colonel Price found numerous instances where SP4 Crafts went well beyond the call of duty as a captive.
- **Tab 3.** This section contains comments from Mr. Duane Frederic, a well known POW and MIA researcher, that provides further support for this recommendation.
- **Tab 4.** At this tab are copies of the letter and four award recommendations written by SP4 Crafts in response to a request from the Commandant of the Marine Corps. This information served as the basis for a posthumous award of the Medal of Honor for Marine Corps Captain Donald G. Cook who was held in the same POW camps as SP4 Crafts. Providing this information completed SP4 Crafts last official duties before being discharged from the Army, thus the closure date of the DA Form 638 reflects the date he signed the letter to the Marine Corps Commandant.
- **Tab 5.** These documents show actions taken by the Marine Corps after receiving SP4 Crafts' information.
- **Tab 6.** A copy of the Joint Resolution of the State of Maine House and Senate recognizing SP4 Crafts' safe return from captivity.



Douglas E. Moore  
Colonel, US Army Retired  
703-970-4215  
Doug.Moore@Amedd.Army.Mil

# RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD

For use of this form, see AR 600-8-22; the proponent agency is ODCSPER

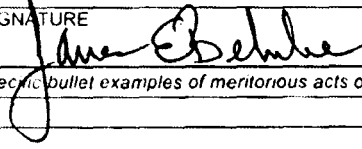
For valor/heroism/wartime and all awards higher than MSM, refer to special instructions in Chapter 3, AR 600-8-22.

1. TO Chief, Military Awards Branch, US Army Human Resources Command, Hoff II, 200 Stovall St., Alexandria, VA 22332	2. FROM LTC James E. Behnke, US Army (Ret)	3. DATE 15 Mar 09
--	---	----------------------

## PART I - SOLDIER DATA

4. NAME Charles Earle Crafts	5. RANK SP4	6. SSN [REDACTED]
7. ORGANIZATION Ranger Advisor, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Detachment 95, III Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam	8. PREVIOUS AWARDS POW Medal, GCM, Expeditionary Medal, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal, National Service Medal, Sharp Shooters Badge	
9. BRANCH OF SERVICE United States Army	10. RECOMMENDED AWARD BSM	11. PERIOD OF AWARD a. FROM 29 Dec 64 b. TO 8 Mar 67
12. REASON FOR AWARD 12a. INDICATE ACH, SVC, PCS, ETS, OR RET SVC	12b. INTERIM AWARD IF YES, STATE AWARD GIVEN YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13. POSTHUMOUS YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## PART II - RECOMMENDER DATA

14. NAME James E. Behnke	15. ADDRESS [REDACTED]
16. TITLE/POSITION Senior Advisor, 33rd Vietnamese Ranger Bn	17. RANK LTC
18. RELATIONSHIP TO AWARDEE Immediate Supervisor/Commander	19. SIGNATURE 

## PART III - JUSTIFICATION AND CITATION DATA (Use specific bullet examples of meritorious acts or service)

20. ACHIEVEMENTS
ACHIEVEMENT #1
ACHIEVEMENT #2
ACHIEVEMENT #3
ACHIEVEMENT #4
21. PROPOSED CITATION

## NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION FOR AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

I recommend the Bronze Star Medal be awarded to SP4 Charles Earle Crafts, US 51479671, for extremely meritorious service during the period 29 December 1964 until 8 March 1967.

Although only a PVT E-2 when captured during the Battle of Binh Gia, he immediately began calling on his military training. During the first few minutes after their capture, SP4 Crafts and SSG Harold G. Bennett began planning their first escape attempt, but were foiled when the enemy suspected their plan and closed tightly around them.

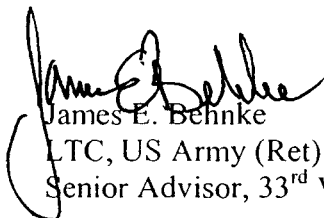
As the months of captivity wore on, SSG Bennett began showing the debilitating signs of disease and malnutrition, so SP4 Crafts began assisting him and encouraged him to eat the meager rations they were given. Unfortunately, his efforts proved to be futile because the Viet Cong guards murdered SSG Bennett shortly thereafter; making him the first American to die while being held captive in Vietnam.

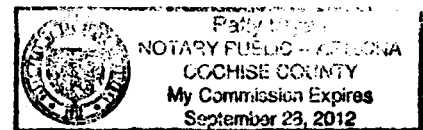
Shortly thereafter, Captain John Schumann was brought to the same camp. Over a period of months, he began suffering from malnutrition, kidney failure, and pneumonia. SP4 Crafts did everything he could to get help from their captors and tried his best to nurse Captain Schumann back to health; only to watch him die in his arms on 7 July 1966. Risking certain death, SP4 Crafts fulfilled a promise to return Captain Schumann's engraved wedding ring to his wife in order that she might have that small bit of closure.

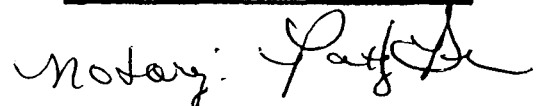
After being released, SP4 Crafts became a valuable source of information for American intelligence regarding POW conditions in South Vietnam. While being debriefed, he was visited by Marine Corps representatives seeking information about Captain Donald G. Cook, USMC, who was held in the same POW camps with him. SP4 Crafts was then asked to write several recommendations that were used by the Commandant of the Marine Corps to obtain a posthumous award of a Medal of Honor for Captain Cook.

In summary, SP4 Crafts relied on his military training and faith in God to survive more than two years of brutal captivity in several jungle POW camps. Without adequate food or clean water, he suffered from malnutrition, malaria, and other jungle diseases, but he held to the Code of Conduct and refused to provide his captors with any useful military information.

As stated on the DA Form 638, none of the officers in my higher supervisory chain of command during this timeframe are still living; consequently, I had to sign the immediate authority block myself.

  
James E. Behnke  
LTC, US Army (Ret)  
Senior Advisor, 33<sup>rd</sup> Vietnamese Ranger Battalion




Notary: 

## **PROPOSED CITATION FOR THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL**

**The Bronze Star is awarded to Specialist Fourth Class (SP4) Charles Earle Crafts for exceptionally meritorious service during the period 29 December 1964 to 8 March 1967. As a Prisoner of War in Vietnam, SP4 Crafts relied on his military training and faith in God to steadfastly refuse to give his captors any useful military information and defied their attempts to indoctrinate him into their Communist ideology. When the Non-Commissioned Officer with whom he had been captured began showing signs of severe malnutrition and other maladies, he tried his best to get him to eat the meager rations provided. Later in his captivity, he did everything possible to aid and comfort another POW who was suffering from malnutrition, kidney failure, and pneumonia; only to watch him die in his arms. Upon release from captivity, SP4 Crafts provided invaluable information to the intelligence community regarding the POW situation in South Vietnam. He also provided the Commandant of the Marine Corps with information regarding the senior POW in his camp that resulted in him receiving a posthumous award of the Medal of Honor. SP4 Crafts outstanding performance of duty was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflects great credit upon him and the military service.**

August 31, 2006



Major General Rhett A. Hernandez, U.S. Army  
Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command  
200 Stovall Street, Hoffman II  
Alexandria, VA 22332

Dear General Hernandez:

I recently completed a 142-thousand word biography about deceased Marine Colonel Donald Cook. He was the first Marine captured in the Vietnam War, and the first Marine in history to earn the Medal of Honor while a POW. Cook died in captivity in December 1967, and his remains have never been recovered. Cook's biography is entitled ***The First Marine Captured in Vietnam*** and will be published this winter by McFarland Publishing Company of Jefferson, North Carolina (see attachment).

During the course of over five years of research into Cook's life, I uncovered the heroic story of U.S. Army Private First Class Charles Crafts who was captured in the same battle as Cook. I have studied Craft's POW debriefing file, read many declassified messages about him, and personally interviewed him at his home in Maine. I found out that Crafts was held with Cook in the same jungle POW camps, and later released by the Viet Cong.

I am writing to you to point out that Crafts never wavered in performing his dangerous duties as a radio operator during the Battle of Binh Gia on December 29, 1964. He steadfastly accompanied U.S. Army Sergeant Harold Bennett across fire-swept terrain until they were captured together. Moreover, Crafts faithfully complied with the U.S. Military Code of Conduct throughout his captivity, and was always loyal to Cook who was the senior American POW. After 26 months as a POW, he was released by the Viet Cong on February 16, 1967.

Upon his release, the Viet Cong did not realize that Crafts had hoodwinked them on behalf of his fellow POWs, first for deceased U.S. Army Major John Schumann. Crafts boldly took

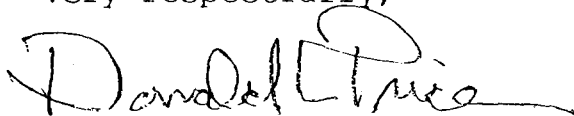
Schumann's wedding ring out of the POW camp right under their noses. This involved real risk because the National Liberation Front considered such "contraband of war" to belong to the people by default if the legal owner was deceased. If this had dawned on them, Crafts could have been charged with stealing from the people--a grievous offense in the Front's theoretically puritanical view of property rights. Nevertheless, Crafts was determined to return the ring to Major Schumann's wife, Hannelore.

Second and even more daring, Crafts smuggled out letters written by Cook and Douglas Ramsey, a U.S. State Department officer. He used the obvious: his glasses case. Crafts slit the case's brown plastic lining with a razor blade and slipped the tightly folded sheets inside. He then put the case inside a small canvas dispatch bag the Viet Cong gave him to carry his scant belongings out of captivity. Crafts did not read the letters thus he did not know if they contained information harmful to himself if found by the Viet Cong. This is a tribute to the confidence Crafts had in Cook and Ramsey, and in his unselfish willingness to place himself and his potential freedom in jeopardy for his fellow POWs.

I must also mention that during his "release ceremony," Crafts appealed to a high-ranking Viet Cong cadre to release Cook instead of himself. Crafts told the cadre that he had no family but Cook had a wife, and four children who needed him at home. (The cadre denied his request.) This is a manifest example of Crafts' selflessness as a soldier, a POW, and an American.

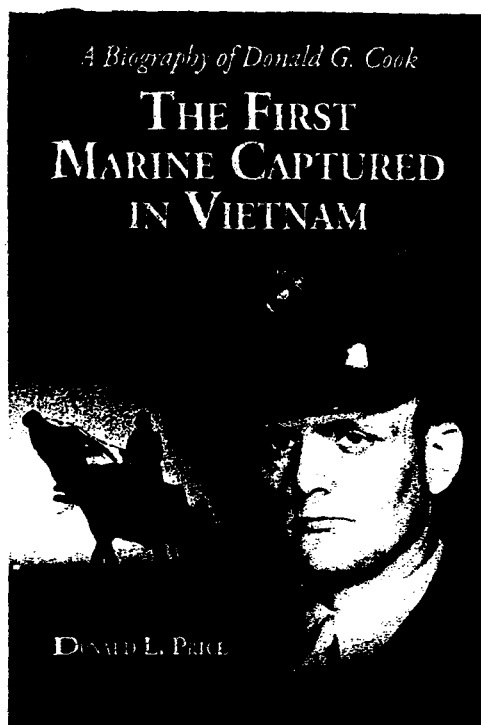
I sincerely hope that the foregoing will be taken into deliberation when Crafts is considered for long overdue recognition of his heroic meritorious service as a POW.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Donald L. Price". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Donald L. Price  
Colonel, U.S Marine Corps, Retired

attachment



# The First Marine Captured in Vietnam

*A Biography of Donald G. Cook*

Donald L. Price

[320] pages \$35 softcover ISBN 0-7864-2804-X 2006  
Ca. 70 photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index

Colonel Donald Gilbert Cook was the first U.S. Marine captured in Vietnam; the first Marine in history to earn the Medal of Honor while in captivity; and the first Marine POW to have a U.S. Navy ship named in his honor, the *USS Donald Cook* (DDG-75). On December 31, 1964, while serving as an observer with a South Vietnamese Marine Corps battalion on a combat operation against Viet Cong forces, he was captured near the village of Binh Gia in South Vietnam. Until his death in captivity in

December 1967, Cook led ten POWs in a series of primitive jungle camps. His leadership and adherence to the U.S. Military Code of Conduct earned him the nation's highest military award, but Cook never received historical attention commensurate with his enormous accomplishments.

This is the first book-length biography of Colonel Donald G. Cook. With background information on Cook's life and prewar career, the book concentrates especially on his three years in captivity, and is the first book exclusively about a Marine POW held in South Vietnam. It covers the ten other POWs under his command, including Sgt. Harold Bennett (the first American POW executed in Vietnam) and Sgt. Issac Camacho (the first American POW to escape in Vietnam). The author outlines the circumstances surrounding Cook's Medal of Honor citation and death. Throughout, Cook's adherence to the Corps' traditional leadership principles and knowledge of the Code of Conduct are highlighted, and his biography is a unique case study of exemplary leadership under extremely difficult conditions. Nearly 70 photographs are included.

Retired Marine Colonel Donald L. Price earned the Silver Star, three Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart for service in Vietnam. He lives in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

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**DUANE E. FREDERIC**



**September 20, 2006**

**U. S. Army Human Resources Command  
ATTN: Army Awards Branch  
200 Stovall St.  
Alexandria, VA 22332-0471**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

**It is my great honor to recommend award of the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal with V device, and Bronze Star Medal to SP4 Charles Earle Crafts for his bravery and courage on the battlefield at Binh Gia, and as a prisoner of war against the Viet Cong in the Republic of Vietnam during the period of 29 December 1964 – 23 February 1967.**

**Rick Atkinson, a famous military history author was interviewing Paul Fussell, author of *The Boys' Crusade* for a C-SPAN book review late in 2003. Paul quoted another British author on the definition of heroism from World War II, but it is a timeless definition ever since eons ago, when one warrior engaged in a life or death struggle with his enemy: *"Heroism is not running away from the battlefield."***

**This definition definitely applies to SP4 Crafts, who remained on the Binh Gia battlefield furiously performing his duties amid the carnage and chaos of 29 December 1964 as SSG Harold George Bennett's Radio Telephone Operator until both of them were captured by the Viet Cong. Crafts was able to keep clear radio transmissions to orbiting helicopters attempting to deliver machine gun fire on the over-powering Viet Cong forces at Binh Gia.**

**Specialist Crafts consistency supported the efforts of CAPT Donald G. Cook, USMC, who as Senior American Prisoner, created a covert resistance organization under the noses of their Viet Cong captors. This included Specialist Crafts' willingness to attempt escape on three occasions; resisting indoctrination and interrogation to the best of his ability; caring for CPT John Schumann and comforting him in his arms when he died from the cumulative effect of malnutrition and slow starvation rations, malaria, and ineffective medical attention when his kidneys failed. Crafts' suffered greatly from these same brutal conditions and was released by his Viet Cong captors as a humanitarian gesture due to his devastating bouts of malaria.**

**Most important in my opinion is his willingness to smuggle out the notes of CAPT Cook, and the wedding ring of CPT Schumann upon his release from captivity. This act of personal bravery was voluntary on his part owing to his great respect for CAPT Cook and CPT Schumann. Should Crafts' treachery been discovered by his Viet Cong captors prior to his return to U.S. military control, in my opinion, he would not have been released. Further, I am convinced that he would have died from malaria and slow starvation along with CAPT Cook, if we are to believe the Viet Cong reporting in 1973 that CAPT Cook died on or about 8 December 1967 from malaria and other diseases associated with malnutrition and slow starvation rations.**

**Additionally, Special Crafts co-operated with Army intelligence agents after his release by providing comprehensive and highly accurate information concerning all aspects of the operation of several Viet Cong POW camps he survived during two years, one month, and twenty-four days of brutal jungle captivity.**

**In my opinion, award of these three medals to Specialist Crafts is fully justified and proven by the archival documents and witness statements provided by LTC James Behnke, USA (Ret.) and COL Douglas E. Moore, USA (Ret.)**

**Thank you for your favorable consideration of this request.**

**Respectfully submitted,**



**Duane E. Frederic  
Vietnam Veteran 1969-70  
POW/MIA Researcher**

*he 10/2/85*

# 443-67  
#0211

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY HOSPITAL  
Fort Devens, Massachusetts 01433

8 March 1967

Commandant  
United States Marine Corps  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Attached, please find the recommendations of the undersigned for awards for valor in behalf of Captain Donald G. Cook, USMC, currently a prisoner of the enemy in Viet Nam.

The undersigned was a prisoner with Captain Cook from 2 January 1965 until 16 February 1967, in several different prison camps throughout South Viet Nam.

The attached recommendations are based upon personal observation of Captain Cook during the period outlined above with the exception of the action that occurred on 31 December 1964. This action resulted in Captain Cook being wounded and subsequently captured.

These recommendations are forwarded to you for your consideration and action. If additional information of a specific nature is required, please advise. If substantiating data, information from other sources becomes necessary, U. S. Army Intelligence channels can fill the requirement as needed.

Your attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated by the undersigned as I feel a great responsibility and obligation to the individual, the military service and to the country concerning this matter.

Respectfully yours,

*C. Charles E. Chaffs*

CHARLES E. CHAFFS  
PFC, US  
United States Army

2430

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE AWARD OF THE  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

I, the undersigned would like to present to you, for your consideration and action the recommendation that Captain Donald G. Cook, United States Marine Corps, be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for valor.

The undersigned was a prisoner of war with Captain Cook from January 1965 until my release from custody on 16 February 1967. We were prisoners of the Viet Cong Forces opposing South Viet Nam, the United States and her allies.

I have observed Captain Cook's conduct on a daily basis during this period of confinement outlined above. It is my firm belief, as well as the conviction of all other prisoners of war who are also knowledgeable of Captain Cook, that he is an outstanding exemplary Officer.

During this period of confinement, the Viet Cong removed the insignia of rank and made every attempt, including isolation, physical abuse, restraint and psychological torture to enforce their will upon Captain Cook. In spite of their efforts Captain Cook has successfully resisted their attempts to force him into filling out a biological data card, to write letters or statements derogatory to the United States. The Viet Cong have made repeated attempts to subvert and overcome the influence and impact of Captain Cook's strong, idealistic personality upon all fellow prisoners who have come in contact with him.

To cite specific examples, Captain Cook has persisted in his efforts to maintain a military structure among the prisoners of war even though he has been divested of rank by the Viet Cong. He has assumed full command responsibility without qualification or excuse. During a great deal of the time of his confinement, he has been kept under close guard, in isolation and in shackles which restricted his movements totally. The normal method of shackling is to fix the subject to his pallet with restraints placed over the lower extremities of his body. This prohibits any and all movement, except partial lateral movement of the upper part of his body. The Viet Cong, in their anger at Captain Cook's consistent defiance of them and due to his escape attempt, placed shackles on his wrists. This immobilized him to an almost total degree and was extremely painful and trying.

On another occasion, during a forced march from one camp to another, a prisoner of war named Sergeant Bennett, U.S. Army, became too weak to

Page 1 of 1 Pages

242609-101

continue to march.

DATA

The Sergeant could not comply with their desires and the Viet Cong threatened to shoot him. Captain Cook sat beside Sergeant Bennett and ordered the Viet Cong to discontinue the march until Sergeant Bennett had recovered well enough to continue with the main body. The Viet Congs then directed their threats to shoot and kill Captain Cook. He faced them and defied them to do their worst as he would not move until his instructions were complied with. On another occasion, he was being urged by the Viet Cong interrogator to complete their biological data card. He refused to provide them with any information other than his name, rank and serial number. He would not comply or submit any information as they requested. This was a constant requirement, supplemented by threats of torture, isolation, deprivation and death. He resisted any and all efforts on many occasions to provide any data that would give aid and comfort to the enemy. Captain Cook asserted his character and prestige upon his fellow prisoners of war. He directed them to comply with his recommendations and instructions, as he was the senior officer present. He advised the Viet Cong that he was senior in rank to all prisoners of war and therefore was the spokesman for the group. The Viet Cong did not accept this and would not recognize his rank.

The Viet Cong learned to respect and fear him due to his strength and character and his insistence that they comply with accepted military protocol. Captain Cook was and is a man of principle and strength. He was an inspiration to everyone who came under his influence. He is a credit to his service, unselfish and demanding upon himself. He took great personal risk on many occasions to protect and defend his fellow prisoners of war and his own principles. The undersigned recommends that the award of the Distinguished Service Cross be approved based upon this brief report of Captain Cook's behavior.

If additional facts and details are required, please call upon me.

Respectfully yours,

*Charles R. Crafts*

CHARLES R. CRAFTS  
PFC, US  
United States Army

Page 2 of 2 Pages

EC # 12-11-11

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

contact with him. He has continually exhibited the leadership requirements and personal conduct that inspires all other personnel. He has steadfastly adhered to the principles of his rank and his branch of service in direct and frequent violation of the Viet Cong cadre personnel at great personal risk.

Respectfully yours,

*C. Charles E. Crafts*

CHARLES E. CRAFTS  
PTC, US  
United States Army

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE AWARD OF THE  
BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR VALOR

The undersigned wishes to submit for your consideration and action a recommendation for the award of the Bronze Star Medal for Valor to Captain Donald G. Cook, United States Marine Corps, for his conduct during an engagement with the enemy at Binh Gia, South Viet Nam on 31 December 1964. Captain Cook was assigned as an advisor to an unidentified South Vietnamese Marine Battalion and on 31 December 1964, this unit, while engaged in a "seek and destroy" mission came into contact with hostile forces.

During the resultant action, Captain Cook displayed outstanding leadership with complete disregard for his personal safety in his attempts to mount a counter offensive against a numerically superior and strongly entrenched enemy.

His efforts were hampered by the fact that he was wounded by an enemy bullet which struck him in his left leg and restricted his ability to move from place to place. He continued to direct his Vietnamese counterpart in the conduct of the operation. Within a short time, due to enemy fire superiority, the South Vietnamese unit began to withdraw in disorder, in spite of Captain Cook's efforts to maintain discipline.

Although his wound was severe, resulting in great pain and loss of blood, Captain Cook attempted to hold the position until it was overrun. Because of his limited mobility and generally weakened condition, Captain Cook was taken prisoner by the attacking Viet Cong Forces.

Respectfully yours,

*Charles E. Crafts*

CHARLES E. CRAFTS  
PFC, US  
United States Army

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE PURPLE HEART

The undersigned, wishes to submit for your consideration and action, a request that the Purple Heart Medal be awarded to Captain Donald O. Cook, United States Marine Corps, for a gun-shot wound inflicted upon him during an engagement with the enemy in Viet Nam.

Captain Cook was then assigned as an advisor to a South Vietnamese Marine Battalion, designation unknown.

During a combat action at Binh Gia on 31 December 1964, Captain Cook suffered a bullet wound in his left leg as a direct result of enemy action.

The undersigned can verify that he did witness and observe the wound and did witness and observe the medical treatment required over a period of months to repair the damage sustained by virtue of this wound.

Respectfully yours,

*Charles E. Crafts*

CHARLES E. CRAFTS  
PFC, US  
United States Army

JCS 2478/770

29 November 1974

Pages 1 - 2, incl.

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NOTE TO THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

The enclosed CMC-6-74, 27 November 1974, "Recommendation for Award of the Medal of Honor to Lieutenant Colonel Donald G. Cook and Chief Warrant Officer John W. Frederick, Jr., with its Appendix, is submitted for consideration by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Joint Secretariat

ENCLOSURE

MEMORANDUM BY THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS  
for the  
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR TO  
LIEUTANT COLONEL DONALD G. COOK AND  
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER JOHN W. FREDERICK, JR.

CMCM-6-74

27 November 1974

1. I am concerned that the heroic achievements of Lieutenant Colonel Donald G. COOK and Chief Warrant Officer John W. FREDERICK, Jr., have not received appropriate recognition. Reconsideration of the events surrounding the respective periods of captivity has prompted the recommendation for award of the Medal of Honor in each case.
2. Review of the recommendations in the Appendix will reveal acts of gallantry and intrepidity which justify the recommendation for each award.
3. I suggest, therefore, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary of the Navy that the award of the Medal of Honor be approved in the cases of Lieutenant Colonel Donald G. COOK and Chief Warrant Officer John W. FREDERICK, Jr.

*R. E. Cushman, Jr.*  
R. E. CUSHMAN, JR.

DAFTAR 120 1010/5 (Rev. 9-80) 2/2-0100-001-000

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1231046 LABS

Originating command fill in all information available. If in the operating force, forward to approving authority with copies to intermediate echelons as directed by

1. SERVICES NO.		10. NO. OF MONTHS		11. MEDICAL/HOS. SPEC		12. NO. OF ACTIVE DUTY	
DATE		DATE		2502/0270/0202		N/A	
1. NAME (Last, first and middle)				13. EST. RETURN DATE			
COOK, Donald Gilbert				N/A			
7. (SPECIALTY, GRADE, BRANCH, etc.)				14. M.O.B. STATION			
USMC				N/A			
8. GRADE/DATE				15. UNIT AT TIME OF ACTION/SERVICE			
LtCol (then Captain)				MIA/POW			
9. MTC/MAC (During Air/Service)				16. PREVIOUS PERSONAL AWARD			
N/A				POW			
10. RECOMMENDED AWARD				17. OTHER PERSONNEL BEING RECOMMENDED FOR SAME ACTION			
Medal of Honor				None			
11. PERMANENT AWARD OR ENDORSEMENT (NOT YET APPROVED)				None			
12. NUMBER OF YEARS OF THIS MEDAL				13. OTHER PERSONNEL BEING RECOMMENDED FOR SAME ACTION			
One				None			
14. ACTION DATE/INTERIM PERIOD				None			
Dec 1964 - Dec 1967				None			
15. AREA OF ACTION/SERVICE				None			
POW/MIA				None			
16. I certify that the facts contained in the summary of action are true and correct.							
NAME, GRADE, TITLE OF DESIGNATOR				SIGNATURE			
R. E. CUSHMAN, JR. General, U. S. Marine Corps				R. E. Cushman, Jr.			
17. (SPECIALTY, GRADE, BRANCH, etc.)				18. (SPECIALTY, GRADE, BRANCH, etc.)			
USMC				USMC			

Commandant of the Marine Corps      President of the United States

NO	COMMENTS (To be completed by originator)	REFERENCE NO.	STATUS	DATE
1			<input type="checkbox"/> YES	
			<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
2			<input type="checkbox"/> YES	
			<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
3			<input type="checkbox"/> YES	
			<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
4			<input type="checkbox"/> YES	
			<input type="checkbox"/> NO	

23 TO BE COMPLETED BY BOARDING AUTHORITY:

DISPOSITION OF BASIC RECOMMENDATION	COMMIT YES NO	EXTRAORDINARY RECOMMENDATION	SPECIAL CASE	TOTAL	DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

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On 31 December 1964 while serving as Senior Marine Advisor to RVN Marines near Binh Gia, Phuoi Tuy Province, RVN, Lieutenant Colonel (then Captain) Donald G. COOK was wounded in the left leg and captured by Viet Cong forces. On 27 January 1973, the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) indicated that Lieutenant Colonel COOK died on 8 December 1967 while in captivity.

Immediately upon his arrival at the first of several prison camps to which he was to be confined, he established himself as the commanding officer of all the POW's. This action was taken despite attempts by the Viet Cong to remove all semblance of rank structure and discipline. In spite of physical abuse and isolation, Lieutenant Colonel COOK resisted his captors' efforts to break his will and determination to maintain an effective military organization among the prisoners. Perhaps the greatest tribute to his indomitable spirit was the fact that his captors warned the other POW's not to act like Lieutenant Colonel COOK, as he was a "bad example" for them to emulate. Rather than seek anonymity and perhaps easier treatment, he impressed upon the Viet Cong that he was senior and therefore spokesman for the group, fully aware that by so doing he was inviting harsher treatment for himself.

Refusing to cooperate with his captors in any manner it has been related by fellow prisoners that he would refuse to give them even "the time of day." The effect on his fellow prisoners was to tremendously impede the Viet Cong psychological warfare efforts.

Amongst both his captors and the POW's he gained exceptional respect for his ability to perform manual labor. By so doing, and by instituting a program of physical fitness, he attempted to enhance the conditioning and overall health of himself and his men. Primarily through his own accomplishments at physical labor he greatly undermined Viet Cong propaganda that Americans were weaklings and that officers in particular could not perform manual work. In one instance Lieutenant Colonel Cook purposely stepped up the pace in a work detail in order to embarrass a Vietnamese interpreter who was working alongside him.

Shortly before his transfer to another camp Lieutenant Colonel COOK contracted malaria, compounding his already deteriorating health and physical condition. His physical condition became so bad that he literally staggered as though intoxicated; yet, over the entire march, he refused to let anyone carry his pack or otherwise hinder themselves by helping him. His courage and perseverance were also complimented by the Camp Commander.

In the new camp at Phuoc Long, Lieutenant Colonel COOK regained some of his strength, although "killer malaria" and typhoid were rampant. When a number of the prisoners became severely ill with malaria Lieutenant Colonel COOK unhesitatingly assumed a larger bulk.

DATE:

From: SECNAV INDDOM

To: CHNAVPERNS (PERS C-23) CMC (CODE DL)

1. Reviewed and recorded. Forwarded for appropriate action.
2. Extraordinary horizon recommended ☐ Yes ☐ No.

(Signature)

CPB 001.003

- of the workload in order that the other POW's would not have to increase their duties. Additionally, his knowledge of first aid as well as his concern for the welfare of the men under his "command" prompted him to nurse the severely sick individuals. By administering heart massage, moving the limbs, and keeping the men's tongues from blocking air passage he was directly instrumental in saving the life of several POW's who were convulsing with severe attacks of malaria.

When one of the men contracted typhoid, Lieutenant Colonel COOK nursed him constantly, without concern for the fact that he was risking infection himself. The risk of infection was especially great in view of his weakened condition, something nobody could have been more aware of than he himself. On numerous occasions he shared his food (in spite of the fact that he was often on half ration) with men sicker than himself, even to the extent of giving up his allowance of penicillin in order that another man might benefit by its use.

By establishing

*Methods*

Lieutenant Colonel COOK maintained communication with the other POW's even when he was not authorized to converse with them because of his leadership qualities. In these messages he encouraged others to resist and instructed them in how to do so. He could have negotiated for his own early release on numerous occasions but steadfastly refused to cooperate in the least, even though he knew it meant he would spend the rest of the war in captivity. At one point he even recited the nomenclature of a pistol which was being held to his head. In his deteriorated condition it is reasonable to assume that he realized he could not survive for any extended period of time and hence might die in captivity. In this respect he went far above the call of duty, literally risking his life in order that he might provide an example for his fellow POW's to follow. By willingly and knowingly exposing himself to deadly diseases, taking on more than his share of the work load and refusing to give in to the enemy he gallantly sacrificed health, liberty and life to an extent far beyond that reasonable required or expected.

The President of the United States in the name of the Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

LIEUTENANT COLONEL DONALD G. COOK  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while interned as a Prisoner of War by the Viet Cong in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 1964 - December 1967. Despite the fact that by so doing he knew he would bring about harsher treatment for himself, Lieutenant Colonel (then Captain) COOK established himself as the senior prisoner, even though in actuality he was not. Repeatedly assuming more than his share of the manual labor in order that the other POW's could improve the state of their health, Lieutenant Colonel COOK willingly and unselfishly put the interests of his comrades before that of his own well-being, and eventually, his life. Giving more needy men his medicine and drug allowance while constantly nursing them, he risked infection from contagious diseases while in a rapidly deteriorating state of health. This unselfish and exemplary conduct, coupled with his refusal to stray even the slightest from the Code of Conduct earned him the deepest respect from not only his fellow prisoners, but his captors as well. Rather than negotiate for his own release or better treatment, he steadfastly frustrated attempts by the Viet Cong to break his indomitable spirit, and passed this same resolve on to the men whose well-being he so closely associated himself with. Knowing his refusals would prevent his release prior to the end of the war, and also knowing that his chances for prolonged survival would be small should he do so, he chose to adhere to a Code of Conduct far above that which could be expected. His personal valor and exceptional spirit of loyalty in the face of almost certain death reflected the highest credit upon Lieutenant Colonel COOK, the Marine Corps, and the United States Naval Service.

JERROLD B. SPEERS  
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE



The Senate of Maine  
Augusta, Maine 04330

March 8, 1967

PFC Charles Earle Crafts  
North Jay  
Maine

Dear Mr. Crafts:

I have been requested to send along to you a copy of the Joint Resolution passed by both the House and Senate honoring your safe return from captivity by the Viet Cong. It is a great honor for me to forward this to you, and I would like to add my own sincere congratulations to those expressed by the Legislature. It must certainly have been an extremely harrowing experience, and you must be very happy to be home.

You are to be most highly commended.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerrold B. Speers".

Jerrold B. Speers  
Secretary of the Senate

JBS:iv

# State of Maine

*In the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-Seven*

*Joint Resolution in Recognition of the Safe Return from Captivity of  
Private First Class Charles Earle Crafts of North Jay, Maine.*

**Whereas**, the United States of America has been confronted by grave challenges to the freedom of mankind in Viet Nam; and

**Whereas**, Private First Class Charles Earle Crafts of North Jay, Maine was assigned to Viet Nam in the service of his State and Country; and

**Whereas**, Private Crafts fell into the hands of the Viet Cong while in the line of duty during a military patrol in December, 1964; and

**Whereas**, Private Crafts was presumed to be missing in action and the absence of communication and fear of the unknown during the two years of captivity gave cause for grave concern to his parents and to all who knew him; and

**Whereas**, final word did not come until February 23, 1967, that the Viet Cong had released two prisoners as a Lunar New Year gesture sixteen days earlier, and that Private Crafts and a companion had safely reached American lines; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved:** That the Members of the 103rd Maine State Legislature are grateful for the safety and well-being of Charles Earle Crafts and share in these moments of rejoicing with his parents upon the return of one of Maine's brave soldiers; and be it further

**Resolved:** That a copy of this Resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be sent to Private First Class Charles Earle Crafts.

## House of Representatives

Read and Adopted  
Sent up for Concurrence

March 1, 1967

BERTHA W. JOHNSON  
Clerk

## In Senate Chamber

Read and Adopted  
in Concurrence

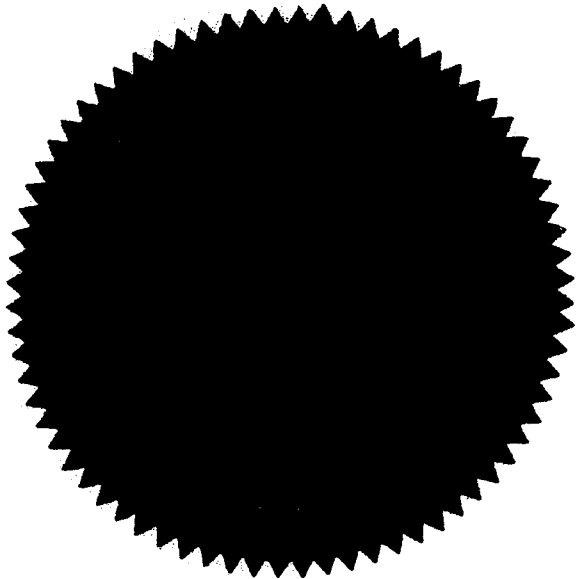
March 2, 1967

JERROLD B. SPEERS  
Secretary

United States of America  
State of Maine  
Office of Secretary of State

**I**, JOSEPH T. EDGAR,, Secretary of State of the State of Maine, and custodian of the seal of said State, do hereby certify:

That I have carefully compared the annexed copy of the Joint Resolution in Recognition of the Safe Return from Captivity of Private First Class Charles Earle Crafts of North Jay, Maine, with the original thereof, and that it is a full, true and complete transcript therefrom and of the whole thereof.



**In Testimony Whereof.** I have caused the seal of the State to be hereunto affixed. GIVEN under my hand at Augusta, this sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixty-seven and in the one hundred and ninety-first year of the Independence of the United States of America.

*Joseph T. Edgar*  
Secretary of State