Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510  

July 3, 2019

The Honorable Ryan D. McCarthy  
Acting Secretary of the Army  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Dear Acting Secretary McCarthy:

We are writing to request a formal review by an award decision authority to posthumously award the Medal of Honor to Corporal Waverly B. Woodson, Jr., one of the Forgotten Heroes of WWII.

In the early hours of June 6, 1944, Cpl. Woodson, an Army medic assigned to the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, landed on Omaha Beach. Despite having been struck by shrapnel while aboard his Landing Craft Tank and being wounded in his groin and back, Cpl. Woodson went above and beyond the call of duty by spending 30 grueling hours saving the lives of dozens, if not hundreds, of his fellow soldiers. Cpl. Woodson was a war hero who has been inadequately recognized for his actions on D-Day.

We understand that the Army is preventing a formal review by an award decision authority due to the lack of an original award recommendation. The documentation of Cpl. Woodson’s valorous actions on D-Day have been supported by Linda Hervieux, a journalist whose 2015 book titled Forgotten: The Untold Story of D-Day’s Black Heroes, At Home and At War, cited a memorandum in the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library that comments on Cpl. Woodson’s extraordinary bravery. This memorandum to the Roosevelt White House from War Department aide Philleo Nash states:

"Here is a Negro from Philadelphia who has been recommended for a suitable award. He was first recommended by his C.O. for a Distinguished Service Cross, but General Lee’s offices said the act merited a Congressional medal ... This is a big enough award so that the President can give it personally...."

This powerful statement refers to the recommendation of Cpl. Woodson by his Commanding Officer for the Distinguished Service Cross. It indicates that after the initial recommendation was made, the office of U.S. General John C.H. Lee in Britain said that Cpl. Woodson's actions merited a Congressional Medal—one given by the President of the United States. There is only one medal to which the General could have been referring: the Medal of Honor.
Based on extensive research on his service record, it is clear that Cpl. Woodson did not receive the Medal of Honor during WWII because of the color of his skin. We believe that the Army has sufficient evidence of the required recommendation to, at a minimum, permit a formal review by an award decision authority. Accordingly, we respectfully ask the Army to rectify this historic injustice and appropriately recognize this valorous Veteran with a posthumous recommendation for the Medal of Honor.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Elijan Cummings
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress

James Clyburn
Member of Congress

Danny Davis
Member of Congress
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Marcia Fudge  
Member of Congress

Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Cedric Richmond  
Member of Congress

Brenda Lawrence  
Member of Congress

Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress

Stacey Plaskett  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress
David Scott  
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver II  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Al Lawson  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

Terri Sewell  
Member of Congress

Colin Allred  
Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress

Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Val Demings
Member of Congress

Alma Adams
Member of Congress

Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress