

August 25, 2016

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Mabus:

I request a 10 U.S.C. § 1130 review of the heroic actions of Corporal Loren Duke Abdalla in the Battle of Okinawa on May 5, 1945 and a favorable determination that he be awarded the Medal of Honor.

It has been brought to my attention that Mr. Abdalla's heroic actions during the Battle of Okinawa may not have been recommended for the Medal of Honor because of prejudice against Native Americans. For that reason, I specifically request you evaluate the actions of Mr. Abdalla compared with other Marines who were awarded medals for similar acts of heroism during this battle.

Our nation owes a significant debt of gratitude for Mr. Abdalla's courageous actions. Now a resident of Fox Lake, Illinois, Mr. Abdalla was a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe and the great grandson of Chief Running Bull. He enlisted into the U.S. Marine Corps at age 18. Assigned to the First Marine Division, 1st Regiment, 1st Battalion, A Company, 1st Platoon, Mr. Abdalla received orders to invade the Island of Peleliu. After the six-day battle, fighting through persistent enemy fire and heavy casualties, Mr. Abdalla was one of only 29 survivors of his battalion. He received the Purple Heart and a promotion to corporal for his heroic efforts and leadership at Peleliu.

After recovering from numerous injuries in the Battle of Peleliu, Mr. Abdalla rejoined his brothers in arms at the Battle of Okinawa, assigned as the 3rd Squad Leader of 1st Platoon. On May 5, 1945, 1st Platoon received orders to attack and secure a ridge. As they advanced, the 2nd Squad Leader took a direct hit from an enemy phosphorous grenade. Under heavy fire, Mr. Abdalla threw his brother in arms over his shoulder and carried him to safety before returning to the frontline to take out six heavy machine gun nests on the way to the top. The only member of his 12-person team to reach the fourth nest, Mr. Abdalla continued forward and removed the remaining two nests by himself. Mr. Abdalla's undaunted courage, superior fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion in the face of near certain death allowed the First Marine Division to safely advance up the ridge.

Mr. Abdalla received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps on February 28, 1947. I have no doubt that his selfless acts of bravery saved the lives of many Marines and helped

America secure victory in the Pacific Theater. Therefore, I ask you to review Corporal Loren "Duke" Abdalla's valorous actions and give proper recognition to his service which upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Thank you for consideration and I look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Kirk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Mark Kirk
United States Senator