

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Leads effort to return Camp Reasoner memorial sign from Vietnam

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) yesterday led a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urging him to enter negotiations with the Vietnamese government to recover the [Camp Reasoner base sign](#) from Vietnam. The sign was dedicated in 1971 to all wounded and missing Marines from the camp, and is an important symbol to Reconnaissance Marines who served in the Vietnam War. The letter was signed by every Marine that is currently serving in the House of Representatives.

The lawmakers wrote, “As our nation continues its commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, the time is right to bring this important part of Marine Corps history home and help provide closure for the thousands of Marines and Corpsman who served at Camp Reasoner throughout the war...Bringing this sign home, at long last, would not only honor fallen Marines like Lt Reasoner, but provide an opportunity to continue fostering good will between former adversaries and promote an expanded US-Vietnam partnership.”

The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion served at Camp Reasoner during the Vietnam War and has been trying to bring the sign home as part of an effort to establish a Vietnamese and United States Friendship Memorial at Camp Pendleton.

Camp Reasoner was dedicated as a memorial to First Lieutenant Frank Reasoner, who served in the Marine Corps and was mortally wounded while trying to save another Marine during the Vietnam War.

The letter can be found [here](#) and full text of the letter is below:

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We are writing you to request that the Department of State commence negotiations for the recovery and return to the United States of the Camp Reasoner base sign from Vietnam. Camp Reasoner operated as a rear area headquarters for Marine Reconnaissance units from 1965 to 1971. The camp was named in 1965 in honor of 1st Lt Frank Stanley Reasoner, who was killed in action outside Da Nang and became the first Marine to be awarded the Medal of Honor for action in Vietnam. The Camp Reasoner sign was commissioned by LtCol William Drumwright, CO, 1st Recon Battalion, in February 1970. The hand-lettered stone and concrete sign served as a physical symbol of fallen comrades in arms to all those who entered the camp. After 50 years, the sign is still located approximately three miles west of Da Nang International Airport in what is now a gravel quarry.

As our nation continues its commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, the time is right to bring this important part of Marine Corps history home and help provide closure for the thousands of Marines and Corpsman who served at Camp Reasoner throughout the war. 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, Ca. is willing to pay for any expenses associated with the move and has requested the honor of hosting the sign as a memorial to Lt Reasoner and the five other Reconnaissance Marines awarded the Medal of Honor during the war, including LCpl Richard A. Anderson, 2d Lt Terrence C. Graves, GySgt Jimmie E. Howard, PFC Robert H. Jenkins Jr., and PFC Ralph H. Johnson, along with all those who served at the base.

Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam in 1995, our relationship has grown remarkably. Over the last 25 years, we have expanded bilateral trade from \$451 million in 1995 to \$62.6 billion in 2018, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command now conducts four major investigation and recovery periods per year in Vietnam, and we have made significant strides addressing war legacy issues such as unexploded ordnance and dioxin. Over the past decade in particular, Vietnam has become an increasingly important security and economic partner in the Indo-Pacific. Evidence of this growing friendship is clearly on display at the former Camp Reasoner site, where the Vietnamese government has set up a protective barrier around the Camp Reasoner sign. Bringing this sign home, at long last, would not only honor fallen Marines like Lt Reasoner, but provide an opportunity to continue fostering good will between former adversaries and promote an expanded US-Vietnam partnership.

Thank you for your consideration, and we stand by to help however we can.

Sincerely,

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI)

Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA)

Rep. Van Taylor (R-TX)

Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA)

Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA)

Rep. Jared Golden (D-MA)

Rep. Steven Palazzo (R-MS)

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)

Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI)

Rep. Connor Lamb (D-PA)

Rep. Greg Pence (R-IN)

Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL)