



February 14, 2022



The Honorable Carlos Del Toro
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Secretary Del Toro,

We are writing to respectfully request your consideration for naming a future U.S. Navy commissioned warship after U.S. Army Master Sergeant Gary Gordon, a Maine native and a Medal of Honor recipient, who was killed in action during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu. MSG Gordon served as a Sniper Team Leader as part of the elite 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, "Delta Force," during combat operations in Mogadishu, Somalia. He was mortally wounded while defending the injured crew of a downed Black Hawk helicopter. His extraordinary heroism was made famous as the subject of the book and movie *Black Hawk Down*.

During Operation Gothic Serpent, now commonly known as the Battle of Mogadishu, MSG Gordon gave his life to save the crew of a Black Hawk helicopter that had been shot down over the city. Seeing that the injured crew could not survive an advance of enemy forces with only aerial coverage, MSG Gordon requested his helicopter mission commander deposit him on the ground to defend the wounded crew. The mission commander initially refused, due to the extreme danger, but relented on MSG Gordon's third request because of his persistence and forceful passion. Once on the ground, MSG Gordon, along with fellow sniper Sergeant First Class Randy Shughart, fought their way to the injured crew, extracted all four injured soldiers from the gun-shot riddled aircraft, and fought valiantly until out of ammunition. It is estimated MSG Gordon and SFC Shughart killed over 25 enemy forces before they were killed.

Currently, the roll-on/roll-off ship USNS *Gordon* (T-AKR-296) is named after MSG Gordon. Yet his extraordinary courage, integrity, and devotion to duty under fire deserve commemoration by a platform that best represents that legacy. The warfighting capability of a DDG-51 *Arleigh Burke* class destroyer exemplifies MSG Gordon's fighting spirit and would be an inspiration to all the crew who would have the privilege to serve aboard the USS *Gary Gordon*. With such a namesake, there is no doubt the crew of the ship would serve with the same pride, perseverance, and bravery as MSG Gordon.

Over the years, we have attended numerous commemorative events in honor of MSG Gordon, a Lincoln, Maine, native. Most recently, Senator Collins attended the unveiling ceremony for MSG Gordon's Medal of Honor Memorial in August 2021. MSG Gordon

represents the best of Maine and the best of America's service men and women. There could be no better namesake for a Bath-built destroyer than MSG Gordon. His is a story of American heroism and courage, and it is a story that should be honored and remembered by naming a warship USS *Gary Gordon*.

Thank you for your consideration and your distinguished service to our nation.

Sincerely,



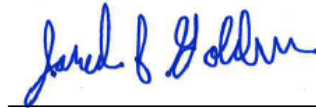
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Janet T. Mills
Governor of Maine