



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Highway  
Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

July 13, 2007

In Reply Refer To: HOTO-1

Mr. William Albracht  
President, Chapter 299 VVA  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
P.O. Box 6076  
Rock Island, IL 61204-6076

Dear Mr. Albracht:

Thank you for your June 23 letter to Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters regarding your efforts to name a bridge in the Quad Cities areas along the Mississippi River in honor of Sergeant John Baker. Your letter was referred to the Federal Highway Administration for reply.

We greatly respect Sergeant Baker's heroism and contributions to our country, but the naming of a highway or bridge is not the prerogative of the Federal Government nor does it require the Federal Government's approval or concurrence. The naming of a bridge or highway is the sole prerogative of the State legislature and the local highway agency. You have taken the appropriate action by contacting the Illinois Department of Transportation and requesting assistance with your project. We encourage you to continue to work with them in this endeavor.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information to you and hope it is helpful.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey F. Paniati  
Associate Administrator for Operations

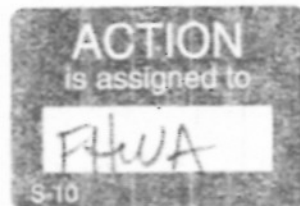
cc: Mr. Jim Baron, ATSSA

**AMERICAN  
ECONOMY**



In Service to America

VVA CHAPTER 299  
PO BOX 6076  
ROCK ISLAND IL 61204 6076



Mrs. Mary E. Peters  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
400 7<sup>TH</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590

June 23, 2007  
Moline, Illinois

Dear Secretary Peters:

In 1967, John Baker was serving in Viet Nam with the U.S. Army when he heroically performed his duty above and beyond the call in support of his fellow soldiers with great peril to his personal well-being. He was subsequently recommended for and received the Medal of Honor. President Lyndon B. Johnson presented Sergeant Baker with the Medal of Honor at the White House on October 24, 1968.

John Baker was born in Davenport, Iowa and raised in Moline, Illinois. He currently has family living on both sides of the Mississippi River in the Quad Cities area while he now resides in South Carolina. Since the time Sergeant Baker received the Medal of Honor, very little has been done in the Quad Cities area to permanently recognize his heroism. Unlike many other communities on both sides of the Mississippi River that have acknowledged the achievements of local residents and "favorite sons," John Baker's accomplishment has gone virtually unnoticed. It is only appropriate that during this time in our country's history when our military is performing so well in the face of great peril, we reach back and recognize a true local patriot.

The Viet Nam Veteran (VVA) Chapters 299 and 776 representing all of the Quad Cities metropolitan area are moving forward with a formal proposal to honor Mr. Baker's accomplishment at the Federal and State levels. Our objective is to have one of the un-named bridges that spans the Mississippi River in our area designated as the John Baker Bridge. This could be done with either the Interstate 280 or Interstate 74 Bridge which are both Quad Cities landmarks and are part of the federal highway system.

We are soliciting your support of this effort on the federal level. The VVA feels strongly about recognizing Mr. Baker during his lifetime and have communicated our initiative to the Federal and Illinois Departments of Transportation requesting assistance for this project to move it quickly and smoothly through the bureaucratic process as an effort in patriotic unity.

As momentum for this project increases, members of the VVA John Baker Bridge Committee can be made available to your staff.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Albracht".

William Albracht  
President  
Chapter 299 VVA