

18 December 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Military Flag Officers
FROM: LtCol Oliver L. North, USMC (Ret)

SUBJECT: Letter of recommendation for awarding the Medal of Honor to Captain E. Royce Williams, USN (Ret.)

On 18 November 1952, then-Lt. E. Royce Williams USN, flying an F9F-5 off USS Oriskany, downed four Soviet-piloted MiG-15s in a 30-35 minute “dogfight.” For his courage in aerial combat Lt. Williams was awarded a Silver Star Medal and ordered never to mention that the enemy aircraft he downed were flown by Soviet pilots and were *enroute* from Vladivostok, USSR to attack Carrier Task Force (CTF) 77 operating off the east coast of North Korea.

On 3 December 2020 my video/podcast *Oliver North’s Real American Heroes* aired an interview with Captain E. Royce Williams, USN (Ret.). In preparing for this episode, I learned the 18 November 1952 event described above occurred off the coast of North Korea while Lieutenant Williams was flying a Combat Air Patrol (CAP) mission over Carrier Task Force (CTF) 77. Oriskany’s Combat Information Center (CIC) vectored the CAP by radio toward 7 inbound “bogeys” and he unhesitatingly maneuvered his F9F “Panther” to engage the enemy – despite two of his CAP wingmen being forced to return to the CTF because of mechanical problems.

The attached summary of the aerial engagement, prepared with the assistance of RADM Doniphan Shelton, USN (Ret.), provides a detailed description of the extraordinary courage and skill demonstrated by Lt. Williams. Outnumbered 7 to 1, battling solo against enemy pilots flying more capable aircraft, bringing down four of them, forcing the remainder to flee and successfully bringing his F9F (with 263 holes in it) to a safe landing aboard the Oriskany are feats unmatched in the Korean War, the Vietnam War or any aerial combat since.

It’s now known this entire event was monitored by National Security Agency (NSA) personnel operating aboard U.S.S. Helena (CA-75). At the time – and for decades later – our ability to intercept and decrypt, in real time, Soviet military communications, was Top Secret. Accordingly, the full story of what Lt. Williams accomplished remained classified Top Secret for over 50 years. He was not allowed to talk about the incident nor was he ever appropriately recognized for his heroism. I now know that there is an organized effort to have Captain Williams, now 95, awarded the Medal of Honor.

A recommendation to upgrade his Silver Star to a Medal of Honor has been submitted to the Navy Awards Board and the American Legion (Resolution 70) has asked Congress to act in favor of awarding The Medal of Honor to Captain E. Royce Williams, USN (Retired).

I believe Captain E. Royce Williams’ “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty” on 18 November 1952, should be recognized with our nation’s highest military decoration; the Medal of Honor.

If you agree, please add your name and support to this effort by RADM Doniphan Shelton, USN (Ret.) at dandpdelmar79@aol.com or Steve Lewandowski at slewandowski@hotmail.com

If you have any questions, you can contact Steve Lewandowski (858) 669-5545.

Thank for your service to our country.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "O. L. North".

LtCol Oliver L. North, USMC (Ret)
(703) 444-7935

Attached: "The Forgotten Hero of the Forgotten War, *Captain E. Royce Williams, USN (Ret)*

"Semper Fidelis" is more than a slogan for U.S. Marines.

"Always Faithful" is a way of life.