

MONTEREY COUNTY



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March 13, 2023

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 1097, Everett Alvarez, Jr. Congressional Gold Medal Act

Dear Congressman Panetta:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors for the County of Monterey, I am writing today to express our strong support for the Everett Alvarez, Jr. Congressional Gold Medal Act. This legislation would bestow Congress' highest honor on Commander Everett Alvarez, Jr., the second-longest held Prisoner of War (POW) in U.S. history. Commander Alvarez was born and raised in Salinas and is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, California.

On August 5, 1964, while flying Operation Pierce Arrow, Commander Alvarez's A-4 Skyhawk was shot down, and he became the first aviator captured in Vietnam. He spent eight years and six months in captivity or 3,113 days. Despite facing torture, isolation and starvation, Commander Alvarez encouraged and inspired fellow POWs to "Return with Honor," by not cooperating with the enemy, and remain loyal to the United States. Following his release and hospitalization, Commander Alvarez resumed his Naval service, graduating from NPS.

On June 30, 1980, Commander Alvarez retired from the Navy, completing a 20-year Naval career. Commander Alvarez went on to serve as Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration, and on the Board of regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Commander Alvarez has earned the Silver Star Medal, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Star Medals, two Purple Hearts, and the Prisoner of War Medal.

The County of Monterey appreciates your effort to provide this well-deserved recognition to one of our local heroes.

Sincerely,

Luis A. Alejo, Chair
Board of Supervisors

Cc: Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, 18th Congressional District