



UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA
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July 26, 1999

Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm
Director General of the Foreign Service and
Director of Personnel
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Nominating Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn for the Secretary's Award for Valor

Dear Ambassador Gnehm:

Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn has been an avid supporter of the Incentive Awards Program and he used much precious personal time to document deserving citations for the staff and officers here. In turn, I am submitting a narrative nomination on his behalf. Ambassadors contributions and awards are normally recognized through Department channels. However, since I have served in 11 posts, under many excellent Ambassadors, in good and bad times, I felt I could fairly say that Ambassador Quinn's accomplishments during his 40-month posting were exceptionally great. Hence, I've decided to send you an unsolicited nomination that emphasizes valorous acts here and throughout his career. He is retiring, and along with you and many other highly successful and effective officers, he is from the class of FS officers who started their careers in Vietnam. Thus, I chose to highlight acts of valor. I've learned of these actions during various conversations I've had with him and others. (Most of them, I believe, can be corroborated in his personnel file.)

I need to point out that I am under a Personal Services Contract with USAID/CAMBODIA. Ambassador Quinn, was a contemporary of ours in Vietnam but I did not know him before his arrival in Phnom Penh on March 17, 1996. So, I was not hired by him, neither were we friends or acquaintances from the past. I did not know him until I saw him "in action" here. I hope that the attached nomination will be reviewed and considered on its merits by an appropriate Awards Committee in State. Thank you. I repeat my warm wishes to you for continuing success and happiness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim (copy)".

Timothy L. Bertotti
USAID/CAMBODIA
Executive Officer

STATE USAID USIA

DATE REC'D BY AWARDS OFFICE:

DATE RELEASED TO PERSONNEL RECORDS:



STATE - USAID - USIA



Nomination for Award

PART I - NOMINATION

NAME OF NOMINEE (Last, First, Middle Initial) QUINN, Kenneth M.	SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	ORG. SYMBOL OR POST Phnom Penh
PRESENT POSITION TITLE AND GRADE AMBASSADOR	Position held during period covered by nomination if different than present	

REASON FOR AWARD

PERFORMANCE
 CUSTOMER SERVICE
 TEAMWORK
 OTHER: _____
 SPECIAL ACT
 INNOVATION
 CRISIS

TYPE OF AWARD RECOMMENDED

THE SECRETARY'S AWARD
 SUPERIOR HONOR AWARD
 TIME OFF FROM DUTY AWARD
 AWARD FOR HEROISM
 MERITORIOUS HONOR AWARD
 CASH
 SECRETARY'S CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
 FRANKLIN AWARD
 DISTINGUISHED HONOR AWARD
 FOREIGN AFFAIRS AWARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICE
 OTHER _____

RECOMMENDED AMOUNT: (Cash/Time Off Hours)	APPROVED AMOUNT:	APPROVED AWARD:
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OFFICIAL USE ONLY

JUSTIFICATION FOR AWARD (Include a concise citation to be used on the award certificate. Additional sheets may be used)

For numerous valorous acts throughout his Foreign Service career, typifying great courage and selflessness in the faces of danger, siege and critical incidents, Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn is hereby given the Secretary's Award for Valor.

A. NOW.....

Late at night on June 17, 1997, intense fighting broke out in the heart of Phnom Penh between factions loyal to Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen.

At the outset of the fighting, a B-41 rocket struck the Ambassador's compound, narrowly missing Ambassador Quinn, his wife and their three children. Immediately afterward, automatic weapons fire surrounded the residence from a fire that engulfed the entire downtown area. The urban battle lasted two hours.

At the outset, panic spread throughout the Embassy community, as troops were marauding everywhere and firing at any vehicle or person moving. The Ambassador, who had pushed his family to the floor and was covering them with his body, nonetheless immediately began to broadcast over the Embassy warden radio network. Because the Ambassador had insisted on radio practice drills, the stage was set for an optimal reaction to this crisis. By pinpointing the nature of the action early and identifying the locale of the fighting, the Ambassador stemmed the developing panic. By forcefully taking charge, he reassured listeners that everything that could be done for their safety was underway. Moreover, his calm voice in the midst of continuing gunfire helped abate potential hysteria.

(CONT'D)

NOMINATED BY: (Name, Title, Signature)	DATE (Month, Day, Year)
APPROVED BY: (Supervisor's Name, Title, Signature) Applicable only if nominated by other than supervisor.	DATE (Month, Day, Year)

Having placed his family member in as secure a setting as possible, and having ordered the Embassy staff to stay "buttoned up," the Ambassador left his residence and alone and on foot made his way across the street that had been the scene of the most intense exchanges of automatic weapon fire, to the home of the Minister of Interior. There, the Ambassador participated in the exchanges and negotiations by which the fighting was finally ended – at least for that night.

Two weeks later, however, the city again erupted in open warfare with tanks roaming the streets and the Embassy compound (with no Marines) was caught in the middle of a day-long gunfight. The Ambassador remained with just a handful of officers in the chancery coordinating assistance to American citizens and reporting to Washington. The threat was such that the Ambassador ordered all classified material destroyed and was preparing to break up the secure communications equipment when the fighting broke. He then rushed to Prince Ranariddh's compound to offer his personal protection to endangered political figures.

He subsequently went to other part of the city where fighting continued, first to liberate a group of trapped missionaries who had huddled in their home for the previous two days and then drove among and marauding troops in search of a Cambodian-American political leader who feared for his life as troops closed in on him. The head of security for the Mormon church later came to Phnom Penh to tell the Ambassador he was "considered a hero" for what he did that day to rescue the missionaries. And the Cambodian- American political leader later embraced the Ambassador and with tears in his eyes thanked him for trying to save him by saying "now I know what it means to be an American."

B. AND THEN.....

These actions alone would justify an award for the Ambassador based on displaying courage and valor in the face of danger. However, from service in Vietnam it is known that Ambassador Quinn also was involved in the following dangerous and life threatening situations in which he displayed courage and/or took life saving actions:

- In December 1968 then FSO-6 Quinn came upon at 10-year old boy who had been accidentally shot in the stomach. His action in rushing the boy to the hospital was credited with saving the boy's life.
- As a District Senior Advisor in Due Ton District of Sadek Province in 1970, Mr. Quinn took part in numerous combat situations including taking part in over 250 hours of helicopter combat operations. Included was a nighttime incident in which a remote outpost was overrun with dozens of casualties. When the U.S. medevac helicopter could not make contact with the outpost, Advisor Quinn boarded the helicopter and twice navigated the aircraft through total darkness into the unsecured landing zone, even though the Viet Cong units were still nearby. On these tow highly dangerous runs, over 30 wounded civilians (women and children) and soldiers were extracted and rushed to medical care.
- On still another occasion in 1970, District Advisor Quinn was nearby when a U.S. Air Force sergeant fell off a bridge into a canal and was drowning in water over his head. Mr. Quinn plunged into the canal and pulled the man out to safety.

- Advisor Quinn came under heavy weapons fire twice while involved in riverine operations on the Mekong river. Subsequently he was wounded in a rocket attack on Saigon in April of 1970.

C. AND IN BETWEEN.....

In addition to the above incidents, Ambassador Quinn was involved in a number of other situations which required courageous action. He narrowly avoided capture by Khmer Rouge elements in 1973 while reporting on the Cambodian border situation; in 1980, he subdued an assailant attacking Presidential candidate John Anderson; and in 1983 he passed undetected through Syrian and PLO checkpoints and gained access to a terrorist military compound in northern Lebanon where he provided unique reporting on abuse of UN facilities and on military preparations.

All of the above actions occurred while Mr. Quinn was a Foreign Service Officer. Few officers have been in so many dangerous situations and consistently reacted with fearlessness, fortitude and decisiveness.

As such, Ambassador Quinn is truly deserving of receiving the Secretary's Award for Valor.