

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 118-

10

OFFERED BY MR. PANETTA OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle I of title V, insert the following:

1 **SEC. 5** ____ . **AUTHORIZATION FOR AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF**
2 **HONOR TO THOMAS H. GRIFFIN FOR ACTS OF**
3 **VALOR AS A MEMBER OF THE ARMY DURING**
4 **THE VIETNAM WAR.**

5 (a) **ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.**—Congress recog-
6 nizes the following acts of valor by Thomas Helmut Grif-
7 fin:

8 (1) Thomas Helmut Griffin distinguished him-
9 self by valorous actions against overwhelming odds
10 while serving as a captain in the Army, Senior Advi-
11 sor, 4/5 Infantry Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division,
12 Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

13 (2) From March 1, 1969 through March 3,
14 1969, during the Vietnam War, such battalion was
15 ordered to forestall an imminent attack on Quang
16 Ngai City threatened by units of the North Viet-
17 nameese Army (hereinafter, “NVA”). The 4/5 Bat-
18 talion engaged unabatedly with an entrenched NVA

1 regiment over the course of three days. Captain
2 Griffin (hereinafter, “CPT Griffin”) risked his life
3 and disregarded his personal safety, all above and
4 beyond his duty, on some 20 occasions, to lead his
5 battalion in the fight as well as direct gunships, air,
6 and artillery strikes on the enemy positions.

7 (3) During the initial phase of battle, CPT
8 Griffin made numerous trips across 50 meters of
9 open ground, while under heavy automatic weapon,
10 rocket, and small arms fire, to advise on the conduct
11 of the battle and better direct strikes against enemy
12 forces. Fearing slaughter of his soldiers, CPT Grif-
13 fin, with one of his counterparts from the Army of
14 the Republic of Vietnam (hereinafter, “ARVN”),
15 charged directly into heavy enemy fire and assaulted
16 a machine gun bunker. CPT Griffin continued these
17 runs, despite the enemy shooting the heels off CPT
18 Griffin’s boots.

19 (4) After taking out the NVA bunker, CPT
20 Griffin brandished the captured machine gun and
21 rocket launcher to exhort his battalion out of the kill
22 zone and continue the assault into the enemy en-
23 trenchments while remaining exposed to heavy fire.
24 CPT Griffin’s raw and intense close combat leader-

1 ship galvanized his battalion to move out of the kill
2 zone and continue their mission.

3 (5) CPT Griffin's ARVN counterpart was
4 struck by close fire, and CPT Griffin unhesitatingly
5 carried the wounded commander to safety while
6 shielding him with his own body against rocket and
7 artillery fire. CPT Griffin proceeded to carry four
8 more wounded soldiers to safety while protecting
9 them with his own body, returning each time against
10 devastating enemy fire. While leading the final at-
11 tack, CPT Griffin was hit three times in the chest
12 by enemy small arms fire, yet continued to lead at
13 the forefront of his battalion until the mission was
14 completed. Under CPT Griffin's command and lead-
15 ership, the 4/5 Battalion continued to reduce the
16 enemy regiment's fighting capacity.

17 (6) CPT Griffin's personal leadership in intense
18 close combat resulted in a major win for his bat-
19 talion against overwhelming odds, killing 93 enemy
20 soldiers and saving the lives of over 300 allied sol-
21 diers by galvanizing and leading them out of the kill
22 zone.

23 (7) CPT Griffin's selfless devotion to duty, his
24 extraordinary heroism, conspicuous gallantry and in-
25 trepidity, and numerous risks of his life above and

1 beyond the call of duty, are all in keeping with the
2 highest traditions of the Army, and reflect great
3 credit on himself, the Armed Forces, and the United
4 States.

5 (b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following with re-
6 gards to the original decision to award a Silver Star to
7 Thomas Helmut Griffin:

8 (1) When awarding him the Silver Star, CPT
9 Griffin’s chain of command was unaware of the full
10 extent of his valorous actions and the numerous
11 risks he took for his soldiers, all above and beyond
12 the call of duty.

13 (2) Congress notes that although CPT Griffin
14 was struck three times by enemy fire, and at one
15 point was completely surrounded by the enemy, he
16 continued to fight and lead his battalion against dev-
17 astating and overwhelming enemy fire.

18 (3) Congress notes that CPT Griffin’s Com-
19 manding Officer, Colonel Dean E. Hutter (ret.), sent
20 a letter to the Department of the Army dated No-
21 vember 6, 2013, in which he accounts for the revela-
22 tion of additional, substantive and material evidence
23 not known at the time of the decision to award the
24 Silver Star, and in which he describes as compelling
25 “the justice of upgrading CPT Griffin’s sustained

1 and varied acts of combat valor to their rightful level
2 of recognition, the Medal of Honor”.

3 (4) Congress further notes that Colonel Hutter
4 issued a letter to former United States Representa-
5 tive Sam Farr on September 15, 2011, noting his
6 support for an upgrade from a Silver Star to a
7 Medal of Honor, having recognized CPT Griffin’s
8 acts of valor as, “numerous, selfless demonstrations
9 of personal risk in pressing a close-combat attack
10 against a well-entrenched element of a battalion-size
11 enemy formation”.

12 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF AWARD OF MEDAL OF
13 HONOR TO THOMAS HELMUT GRIFFIN FOR ACTS OF
14 VALOR AS A MEMBER OF THE ARMY DURING THE VIET-
15 NAM WAR.—

16 (1) AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding the
17 time limitations specified in section 7274 of title 10,
18 United States Code, or any other time limitation
19 with respect to the awarding of certain medals to
20 persons who served in the Armed Forces, the Presi-
21 dent is authorized to award the Medal of Honor,
22 under section 7271 of such title, to Thomas Helmut
23 Griffin for the acts of valor described in subsection
24 (b).

1 (2) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of
2 valor described in this subsection are the actions of
3 Thomas H. Griffin during the period of March 1
4 through March 3, 1969, while serving as a captain
5 in the Army during the Vietnam War, for which he
6 was previously awarded the Silver Star.

