

**James A. Kelly**  
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February 26, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This letter is in support of the late Colonel Young Oak Kim, U.S. Army, to be chosen to receive the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom. Colonel Kim is a great Korean-American who was a military hero for our country – during two wars – as well as an exceptional civic leader.

Colonel Kim was an *American* hero. As a junior officer in the fight against Nazi Germany, he showed pride in his Korean-American ethnicity, but chose make clear to all that he was a part of a larger national purpose. In World War II, as a part of the famous 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion/442<sup>nd</sup> R.C.T., his record was among the best of the best. Recalled in the Korean War, Young Oak Kim became the first minority American to command an Army battalion. Again, his bravery was recognized repeatedly. Then, years later, after retiring from the Army, Colonel Kim founded and led vital civil society organizations in California.

This writer is not an Asian American but believes that recognizing Colonel Kim's service is long overdue. As a 23 year U. S. Navy veteran, and, since, as an American diplomat, I have seen first hand the enormous contributions to our country of Asian Americans. Colonel Kim's accomplishments stand out in every way. It is an honor to join with many other Americans – of every background – to support an award of the 2016 Medal of Freedom to Colonel Young Oak Kim.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Kelly