



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
2D BRIGADE, 1ST ARMORED DIVISION
UNIT 23704, CAMP BONDSTEEL
APO AE 09340

02 April 2001


Colonel Gene Kamena
2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division
Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo
APO AE 09340

To the President of the Board, Army Astronaut Selection Committee:

I fully support and recommend Captain Matthew J. Geraci, 2[REDACTED] for Astronaut duty. CPT Geraci serves as the Multi-National Brigade (East) bomb disposal company commander in the American sector of Kosovo. For the last six months his actions reflect nerves of steel and a warrior spirit like none other. He leads from the front, having personally supervised the disarmament of fifteen incidents involving unexploded ordnance hazards. CPT Geraci's five teams have successfully neutralized over 380 incidents of unexploded ordnance in the last six months with a 100% safety record. This is an amazing accomplishment for any unit in a combat zone, let alone one that routinely renders safe mines, grenades, bombs, and remote controlled and improvised explosive devices.

CPT Geraci thinks on his feet and makes well-calculated decisions under extreme conditions. These attributes will serve him well as an Astronaut. On one occasion, CPT Geraci led a special operations mission into the Prizren Valley to explore caves and mine shafts for mines, booby traps, and ammunition caches. On yet another occasion, CPT Geraci used his technical knowledge and ingenuity to safely extract a dudded hand grenade out of a Kosovar Albanian's basement using ropes and pulleys without injury or damage to the building. CPT Geraci shows an aptitude for improvising and working calmly through complex problems in potentially life-threatening situations.

As the commander of the only Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company in the American sector of Kosovo, CPT Geraci has built a lasting relationship with the teams from other nations operating in Kosovo. He constantly exchanges information and lessons learned with the Norwegian, Finnish, British, Danish, German, Austrian, Italian, Swedish, and Polish disposal teams. These efforts have contributed significantly to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in Kosovo where grenade assaults, minefields, and house bombings are the rule and not the exception. I strongly endorse and recommend CPT Mathew Geraci's selection as an Astronaut.


GENE C. KAMENA
COL, IN
Commanding