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**SCHUMER ASKS PRESIDENT TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR TO HERO NY MARINE WHO DIED AFTER SAVING OTHERS IN IRAQ**

Senator gives full support to Nation's highest military honor for Marine Corporal Jason Dunham of Scio, who died after a foiling attack near Karbala  
Cpl. Dunham was commanding a checkpoint on April 14 when an Iraqi jumped from a car and attacked him – he died after using his helmet to shield other Marines from grenade.

US Senator Charles E. Schumer today urged President Bush to award the Nation's highest military honor – the Congressional Medal of Honor – to Marine Corporal Jason Dunham of Scio New York. Corporal Dunham died after giving up his helmet to protect other Marines from an attacker's grenade on April 14.

"Corporal Dunham laid down his life by shielding members of his unit from danger by throwing himself on a live grenade, an act of unbelievable bravery and selflessness that saved the lives of at least two fellow Marines," Schumer wrote to the President today. "By acting quickly and decisively, and with no regard to possible injury to himself, Corporal Dunham embodied the courage and fortitude that have made the Armed Forces of the United States the most respected in the world. I can imagine no clearer a case of an individual soldier exhibiting the ideals that the Congressional Medal was established to honor."

Corporal Dunham, 22, served with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines based at Camp Pendleton, California. He was commanding a checkpoint near Karbala on April 14 when a black-clad Iraqi leaped out of a car and grabbed him around the neck, according to the Marine Corps. As Dunham fought his attacker, he spotted a grenade in the Iraqi's hand. Dunham shouted a warning to other Marines rushing to his aid and covered the device with his helmet – saving two lives. Mortally wounded when grenade fragments pierced his skull, Dunham lingered for six more days before he died at a military hospital in Bethesda, Maryland with his parents at his side.

Dunham is the first U.S. soldier to be nominated for the nation's highest honor for valor in the Iraq war. He was nominated for the award by his battalion commander. The award must be approved by the Commander in Chief, President Bush.

Congress made the Medal of Honor a permanent decoration in 1863 and it is the highest honor bestowed upon American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, the decoration has been

awarded 3,427 times to individuals who committed acts of bravery far above and beyond the call of duty, including 19 double recipients.

"Awarding Corporal Dunham the Congressional Medal of Honor is the least we as a grateful nation can do in the face of his personal sacrifice and willingness to do his duty no matter what the danger. I encourage you to place the full weight of your office behind ensuring that Corporal Dunham receives the honor he deserves, and I stand ready to assist you with this in any way possible," Schumer wrote to President Bush.