

General Salazar,

Sir, my name is SFC Kelly A. Stewart. I am currently serving an eight-year sentence for crimes I am not guilty of. I would formally request that I receive a new trial & the opportunity to prove my innocence.

I have been a member of the Special Forces community for seven years. When I joined the Army, I knew that all I wanted was to become a member of the Elite Special Forces. Growing up, I watched my father and his outstanding career, as he was an Air Force Chief Master Sergeant, and a member of Special Operations for most of his career. The only thing I ever wanted to be was one of the elite; to be a member of a close-knit community, where no man is left behind. Every choice I made in my career prior to becoming a member of the Special Forces was directed toward achieving that one single goal.

The Special Forces Regiment is more than a career opportunity or a goal. It is more than a job; it was my life. I served honorably, and excelled at being an 18D, and a member of an Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA). I also excelled at being an instructor for the Survival Division at International Special Training Centre (ISTC). I served honorably with 1st Calvary Division, 1st Armored Division, and 82nd Airborne Division.

The Army is a community that always takes care of its own. I know that every time I leave for a deployment or a school, that my family will not do without or need anything because the community will take care of them while I am away. And in return, I have never hesitated to help the families of my comrades. To this day, while I am away from my family, and have left them with many difficult times ahead, the community has stepped up and is doing everything they can to assist my family, and help them get through these hard times. I find some comfort in knowing that they will always be taken care of.

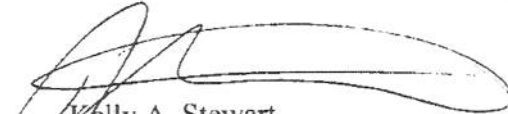
Sir, while I am innocent of the charges of which I was found guilty at my court-martial, I must take responsibility for the actions that I am ashamed of. First, I was unfaithful to my wife and for that I have no excuse. Although it has been difficult, we have resolved our marital relationship; my wife is steadfast by my side. I will never place my wife, the Army, or myself in such a position again.

I must also take responsibility for my behavior following the trial. Although there is no excuse for my actions, I would simply like to offer an explanation. After fourteen-and-half years of honorable and loyal service to our nation with complete faith and confidence in our justice system, to have been falsely accused and convicted of a crime was too much to bear. Clearly, I was not in a normal state of mind. My actions following my trial in no way reflect the fourteen-and-half years of selfless service that I have given our nation, the Army, and Special Forces. In the morning hours after my verdict have been announced, I was not under any guard at any point when I made the decision to attempt suicide. When I ultimately failed with the second attempt, I turned myself in on my own recognizance. At no time was I a threat to any person other than myself. I had no intention being a black mark on my family, the Army, or Special Forces. Sir, unfortunately even the strongest of men have a breaking point.

My family and my comrades across the globe know that a huge injustice has occurred; we will continue to fight for my freedom. If all the charges were to be dismissed, I would love to be reinstated to the United States Army. My ODA, Company, Battalion, and Regiment still see me as a viable asset to the Special Operations Command. I respectfully request that you convene

a new trial & grant me the opportunity to prove my innocence, or overturn my conviction, or show me mercy with clemency until my appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly A. Stewart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kelly A. Stewart
SFC, USA
Special Forces Medical Sergeant