

U.S. AIR FORCE

PORTRAITS
IN COURAGE

VOL. V

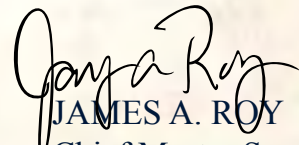
THE CHIEF OF STAFF'S PORTRAITS IN COURAGE

The indomitable character of our Nation is typified by ordinary people who accomplish remarkable deeds in the face of daunting challenges. Indeed, our history is replete with examples of bravery, heroism, and sacrifice, from all walks of American life. Many of the most compelling examples are those of the men and women of our Armed Forces.

The eighteen Airmen who are recognized in these pages proudly follow this tradition. Whether leading a convoy through perilous terrain, risking personal harm to assist an injured comrade, or repelling an enemy assault from the air or on the ground in order to hold a crucial position, these Airmen exemplify the most honorable characteristics of service and the most extraordinary contributions of Airmen serving around the world.

With pride in our heritage and confidence in our future, we are privileged to present the fifth volume of Portraits in Courage. This collection serves as an unremitting tribute to the spirit and accomplishments of all Airmen, poignantly reminding us of the sacrifices that are required—by service members and their families—to secure the many blessings of liberty.


NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
General, USAF
Chief of Staff


JAMES A. ROY
Chief Master Sergeant
of the Air Force

VALOR

I have answered my Nation's call.

I am
an American Airman.
I am a warrior.

In January 2010, then-Captain Thomas Bozung began his third deployment in just eleven months, returning to Afghanistan to fly Casualty Evacuation and Personnel Recovery missions as a pilot of the HH-60G Pave Hawk.

During this deployment, Major Bozung completed many demanding missions, but perhaps his toughest was on March 1. On that day, his flight scrambled to rescue two International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Soldiers who were wounded in an ongoing firefight and required urgent evacuation.

A Coalition casualty evacuation helicopter had attempted to pick up the Soldiers, but was unsuccessful due to the confined environment. Knowing that time was critical, Major Bozung considered the risks and valiantly decided to continue to the site.

The landing site was again declared too confined to land and Major Bozung was forced to abort the initial approach less than ten feet above the roof top. He then directed his crew to begin a hoist exfiltration, but within seconds the aircraft came under fire. Major Bozung maintained his hover and rotated the aircraft, enabling his aerial gunner and pararescuemen to engage the insurgents while his flight engineer secured a hoist for another rescue attempt.

During the perilous engagement, the injured Soldiers were moved to an area where a helicopter could land. Consequently, Major Bozung's wingman landed, recovered both patients, and egressed the zone in under 45 seconds. Meanwhile, Major Bozung's crew provided precise suppressive fire which enabled the patients to be safely evacuated.

For his heroism, Major Bozung was awarded the Air Medal with Valor.



MAJOR
THOMAS BOZUNG

55TH RESCUE SQUADRON
PILOT, HH-60G PAVE HAWK



STAFF SERGEANT
DEANTE BROOKS

455TH EXPEDITIONARY SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON
SECURITY FORCES SPECIALIST

Staff Sergeant Deante Brooks deployed to Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan in 2010 as a member of the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.

On May 19, while performing a security sweep of the perimeter of the airfield, Sergeant Brooks and a Security Forces teammate were stopped by a pair of U.S. Marines. The Marines warned Sergeant Brooks and his partner that unidentified individuals were approaching the base, crossing barriers and terrain at an alarming rate. Swiftly, Sergeant Brooks and his wingman, along with their Marine comrades, selected a course of action.

The group realized they must engage the enemy. As the four Americans approached barriers being used as cover by the insurgents, they began taking enemy fire. The improvised team returned fire, but the two Marines were forced to fall back. Sergeant Brooks, meanwhile, was still engaged with the combatants when he heard a scream; his wingman had been injured by a grenade.

Though still under fire, Sergeant Brooks began providing emergency first aid to the Airman. As news of additional belligerents approaching the perimeter circulated, Sergeant Brooks realized he must get his teammate to safety immediately. Sergeant Brooks raced to the base hospital with the wounded Airman, providing assistance and reassurance along the way.

Once he ensured that the injured Airman arrived safely at the medical facility, Sergeant Brooks refocused his attention. He mounted his vehicle and returned to the fight, manning a 50-caliber machine gun until a helicopter arrived to provide aerial reinforcement.

Sergeant Brooks' heroic actions on May 19 epitomize the indomitable spirit of the American Airman.

During his 2009 deployment to Afghanistan, Technical Sergeant Anthony Campbell, Jr. assisted in recovering and destroying over 280 pieces of ordnance and bulk explosive charges and actively thwarted enemy bomb makers by disposing of more than 2,500 pounds of explosives used in improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Numbers and statistics alone, however, do not adequately describe the honor and valor of this courageous Airman. Sergeant Campbell's ultimate act of extraordinary heroism occurred while engaged in ground operations against the enemy in the vicinity of Heydarabad, Central Helmand Province, Afghanistan, on December 15, 2009. On this date, Sergeant Campbell was tasked with supporting a coalition deliberate cordon and search mission in support of Task Force 4.

During that final mission, Sergeant Campbell cleared a safe path to the mission objective and provided armed security over-watch for his four-man team. He then began the task of clearing a route for follow-on forces through the gates of the objective entry point. During this phase of the operation, Sergeant Campbell recognized an IED in the team's path. As he selflessly moved the team away from the danger area, the device detonated. Sergeant Campbell's valorous actions enabled his team members to safely evacuate the lethal blast zone, but he was killed in the explosion.

For his heroism and intrepidity, Sergeant Campbell was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, the Purple Heart Medal, the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

TECHNICAL SERGEANT ANTHONY CAMPBELL, JR.

755TH BRAVO EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL FLIGHT
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TEAM LEADER



STAFF SERGEANT
CHRISTOPHER FERRELL
755TH AIR EXPEDITIONARY GROUP
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TEAM LEADER



Staff Sergeant Christopher Ferrell, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Craftsman, deployed to Afghanistan and served as a team leader for the 755th Air Expeditionary Group. His primary duties included the exploitation, destruction, and rendering safe of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

During one challenging mission, the lead vehicle in Sergeant Ferrell's group discovered an IED in a gutter while clearing a highway. After assessing the situation, Sergeant Ferrell determined the route to the IED was too deep and too narrow to send in a robot or to wear a protective bomb suit. As a result, Sergeant Ferrell volunteered to proceed to the IED wearing only his body armor and night vision goggles for protection. His quick and decisive action enabled the successful placement of a clearing charge and prevented Coalition forces, as well as Afghan civilians, from being killed or injured.

On another occasion, Sergeant Ferrell's convoy was struck by a lethal IED during a route clearance operation, causing numerous Coalition casualties. In the aftermath of the explosion, Sergeant Ferrell cleared the area of secondary devices and began combat lifesaving procedures on wounded Coalition forces. Despite Sergeant Ferrell's efforts, a friend's life was lost. Without hesitation, however, Sergeant Ferrell worked to prepare his fallen comrade's body for transport and conducted a post-blast analysis. Sergeant Ferrell's professionalism and dedication in the midst of great tragedy undoubtedly prevented future Coalition casualties.

For his brave actions, Sergeant Ferrell was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor.

I am an American Airman.

My mission is to fly, fight, and win.

I am faithful to a proud heritage,

A TRADITION OF HONOR,

and a legacy of valor.

On May 11, 2009, while deployed to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team member Staff Sergeant David Flowers' life changed forever, but his unfaltering commitment to service before self and to his fellow Airmen remained intact.

On that spring day, Sergeant Flowers' team was assisting the Afghanistan National Police at a weapons cache site by securing and disposing of the contents of the cache and other ordnance in the area. During Sergeant Flowers' initial sweep for unexploded ordnance at the site, he stepped on an anti-personnel mine. The ensuing blast caused him to lose his right leg below the knee and completely shattered his left leg. Despite the violent explosion that left him severely wounded, Sergeant Flowers did not stop performing his duties. On the contrary, Sergeant Flowers fell back into the blast hole to prevent other land mines from exploding, effectively saving the rest of his team from suffering similar injuries.

Thanks to the assistance of the brave men and women of his EOD team and the emergency evacuation personnel, Sergeant Flowers was safely returned to Bagram Airfield, where he underwent his first of many surgeries. Just thirteen months after the incident, Sergeant Flowers now walks with the assistance of a prosthetic leg and a cane and continues to look hopefully towards the future.

For his actions, Sergeant Flowers was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, and his second Combat Action Medal.





**MASTER SERGEANT
KENNETH GESTRING**

**NANGARHAR PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM
SENIOR MEDIC**

As the senior medic for the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, Master Sergeant Kenneth Gestring grew accustomed to grueling days outside the wire. During their nine months in the region, his team racked up more than 30,000 miles of travel throughout the area of responsibility, facilitating security and reconstruction in all 22 districts.

During one particularly arduous day, while Sergeant Gestring's team returned from an inspection of a road project in Rodat district, an explosion tore through a busy Afghan village and sprayed shrapnel throughout the area. The blast tossed Sergeant Gestring to the ground and transformed the village into a nightmarish scene. Four children were killed instantly by the explosion; nine Coalition forces and three Afghan National Army Soldiers were seriously wounded. Without regard for his personal safety, Sergeant Gestring immediately established a casualty collection point and began treating the wounded. As a result of Sergeant Gestring's decisive action, all nine Coalition members survived and made a full recovery. In addition, two of the three Afghan Soldiers were saved despite severe wounds.

Sergeant Gestring's response to the attack was all the more remarkable for the fact that he was one of the wounded Coalition members. The blast peppered his back and leg with shrapnel, resulting in nerve damage. Despite his wounds, Sergeant Gestring maintained his poise and tended to his injured comrades with skill.

Sergeant Gestring was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for the injuries he sustained that day.

While assigned as a Combat Controller attached to a U.S. Army Special Forces Team, Staff Sergeant Robert Gutierrez brought airpower to bear with precision and expertise, while he and his teammates fought valiantly against a numerically superior enemy force that commanded a significant tactical advantage from prepared fighting positions on high urban terrain.

During an intense firefight, Sergeant Gutierrez effectively engaged the enemy while passing timely situation reports to Coalition aircraft. Suddenly, he felt a pain in his left side and noticed a shooter on the rooftop to his left. He swiftly retaliated with several rounds, subduing the enemy sniper, but as he continued to return fire, the pain worsened. Sergeant Gutierrez called for a medic as he slumped to the ground.

The medic began treating Sergeant Gutierrez for a sucking chest wound and informed the team leader that Sergeant Gutierrez would likely die without rapid evacuation to medical care. Despite the wound, Sergeant Gutierrez continued to coordinate close air support, repeatedly refusing to remove his communications gear to allow for medical treatment. Battling extreme pain and shortness of breath, Sergeant Gutierrez coordinated with two A-10s to conduct a strafing pass on the rooftops adjacent to the friendly position. While synchronizing an airstrike with the team's exit plan, Sergeant Gutierrez donned his combat equipment and prepared to move. Remarkably, Sergeant Gutierrez walked under his own power for two kilometers to the landing zone, where he finally coordinated for a medical evacuation helicopter.

Sergeant Gutierrez's valorous actions not only helped save the lives of his teammates, but also contributed to the subsequent death of the number two Taliban leader in the region.





**SENIOR AIRMAN
BRANDON HARRELL.**

**755TH EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL FLIGHT, OPERATING LOCATION - DELTA
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TECHNICIAN**

In August 2009, Senior Airman Brandon Harrell vividly demonstrated the warrior ethos while supporting Operation OPPORTUNITY HOLD in the sweltering heat of Afghanistan.

The operation was conducted by Coalition forces in the Arghandab River Valley, a Taliban stronghold. During one phase of the operation, after clearing two kilometers of villages and orchards, a Soldier in Airman Harrell's team stepped on and initiated a buried improvised explosive device (IED). The explosion resulted in the deaths of two Soldiers and injuries to three others. Despite being pelted by potentially deadly fragmentation and being disoriented by pressure from the detonation, Airman Harrell continued to execute the mission.

Aware that the Taliban often utilized an IED detonation as a precursor to complex and coordinated attacks, Airman Harrell willfully placed himself in harm's way in order to clear the area of additional insurgent devices and assist the wounded members of his patrol team. After deeming the area clear of explosive hazards, he assisted with the recovery of the remains of the deceased and moved them to the helicopter landing zone. Airman Harrell then returned to the blast seat to assist with the evacuation of the wounded. After all evacuations were complete, Airman Harrell returned to the blast seat yet again to conduct a thorough post-blast analysis. Through his diligence, Airman Harrell helped determine the tactics which had been employed by the insurgents and ensured the continued safety of his team and other Coalition forces.

For his actions that day, Senior Airman Harrell earned the Army Commendation Medal with Valor.

First Lieutenant Joseph Helton, Jr. deployed as a Flight Commander of a Police Transition Team in the southern region of Baghdad. Lieutenant Helton's team of 51 Security Forces Defenders was responsible for training and developing thousands of Iraqi policemen assigned to 46 Iraqi police stations over 1,000 square miles.

Lieutenant Helton's actions during his extended deployment in Iraq epitomize the Air Force core value of service before self. After completing an eight-month stint as Det 3 Police Transition Team Flight Commander, he volunteered to remain in Iraq as Det 2 Police Transition Team Flight Commander. For Lieutenant Helton, this decision was uncomplicated; Det 2 needed an officer to fill a critical vacancy and he was available. There was no doubt that Lieutenant Helton would volunteer.

Throughout his deployment, Lieutenant Helton led the training and coaching of over 3,380 Iraqi Policemen, located key witnesses against detainees in Camp Bucca, served warrants on high-value insurgents, and led drawdown operations in the dangerous southern region.

On September 8, 2009, while leading a squad on combat operations to assist with drawdown operations in the Mahmudiyah District of Baghdad, Lieutenant Helton's vehicle was struck by an explosively formed penetrator—the deadliest improvised explosive device known. His team reacted with the poise and professionalism that he had instilled in them, but despite their Herculean efforts, Lieutenant Helton's injuries proved fatal.

For his heroism in Iraq, First Lieutenant Joseph Helton, Jr. was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor and the Purple Heart Medal.

**FIRST LIEUTENANT
JOSEPH HELTON, JR.**
732ND EXPEDITIONARY SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON
SECURITY FORCES FLIGHT COMMANDER



I am an American Airman

Guardian of freedom and justice,

My nation's sword and shield,

Its sentry and avenger.

HONOR

I DEFEND MY COUNTRY WITH MY LIFE.



In July 2009, Lieutenant Colonel John Holm began a year deployment in Kabul, Afghanistan as an air advisor training Afghan Soldiers to fly Mi-17 helicopters in support of counterinsurgency operations.

Colonel Holm confronted an extraordinary challenge in February 2010, when a series of avalanches struck a two-mile stretch of road along the Salang Pass, burying hundreds of cars and stranding others in poorly ventilated mountain tunnels. With time running out for the survivors, Colonel Holm brilliantly led his team, flying multiple rescue sorties in treacherous conditions and landing on precarious ground over 10,000 feet above sea level. When Coalition forces called off rescue operations for the evening, Colonel Holm and his crew continued their efforts in the darkness, recovering another eighteen survivors.

Three months later, Colonel Holm was returning from a training mission in Paktya Province when he encountered the aftermath of an improvised explosive device attack. He identified several burning vehicles and noted the presence of American personnel. Despite having an unqualified co-pilot and limited fuel, Colonel Holm returned to the attack site and landed his helicopter to assist the survivors.

Colonel Holm and his crew exited the helicopter and provided assistance to the wounded. They made three trips between the helicopter and the attack site, each time recovering a wounded Soldier. Finally, with time running out and his helicopter desperately low on fuel, Colonel Holm landed at the nearest Coalition hospital, saving the lives of all three Soldiers.

Lieutenant Colonel Holm's willingness to risk his own life to save the lives of others reflects tremendous credit upon himself, as well as the Air Force in which he serves.

In the summer of 2009, Airman First Class Benjamin Hutchins deployed to Afghanistan as a member of the Tactical Air Control Party in support of the 82nd Airborne Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team.

During one incident of his deployment, two Soldiers attempting to recover cargo containers from a river were pulled into the water by a strong current. Despite several entrenched Taliban fighting positions on the east side of the river, Airman Hutchins immediately removed his body armor and helmet and dove into the water in an attempt to save his teammates.

After scouring the area for almost an hour, Airman Hutchins attempted to cross the river back towards friendly forces on the west when he encountered heavy enemy fire. To survive the attack, Airman Hutchins drifted northward with just his mouth and nose out of the water as bullets splashed within three meters of his body, until he finally reached the safety of a Coalition position.

During another firefight, Airman Hutchins and three teammates charged a machine-gun nest, where the group engaged two enemy fighters attempting to fire rocket-propelled grenades at a friendly patrol. The American squad neutralized the machine gun team, but before they could reach adequate cover, the squad endured heavy sniper fire from an insurgent on a rooftop. While seeking cover and under fire, Airman Hutchins accurately called for a precision missile strike from an orbiting MQ-1 Predator, neutralizing the target and saving his platoon.

For his multiple acts of heroism, Airman Hutchins has been submitted for the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, the Airman's Medal, the Combat Action Medal and an Army Commendation Medal.



**MASTER SERGEANT
NEIL JONES**

**755TH EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL FLIGHT
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TECHNICIAN**



While deployed to the 755th Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Flight in Afghanistan, Master Sergeant Neil Jones faced a tremendous challenge on Christmas Eve 2009. Sergeant Jones and two other EOD technicians were inserted by helicopter to a remote location where a Canadian engineer unit had been hit by an improvised explosive device (IED).

Sergeant Jones and his team completed a post-blast analysis and requested air extraction, but air assets were unavailable and the team was directed to meet a ground convoy nearly three kilometers north. The team merged with the surviving Canadian engineers and departed on foot, but shortly into the journey, a teammate broke his ankle while crossing a creek.

Sergeant Jones skillfully provided battlefield first-aid while the Coalition team requested a medical evacuation for the injured Soldier. Instead, the team was instructed to carry the Soldier to a new extraction location. Unfazed, the unit carried their teammate the remaining two kilometers.

During the combined team's movement, three other recovery squads were hit by IEDs as they attempted to reach the planned extraction point. Each time, Sergeant Jones coordinated for alternative extraction and aided the wounded personnel. After the third IED detonation, Sergeant Jones and a group of American and Canadian forces banded together to suppress enemy fire emanating from an elevated housing area. With the area finally secure, Sergeant Jones and his team were able to reach the recovery vehicles and proceed to a Canadian outpost.

Throughout the ordeal, Sergeant Jones responded with poise and professionalism. His leadership coupled with his assistance with the medical triage enabled all the wounded Soldiers to make a full recovery.

While assigned as a vehicle operations apprentice to Task Force Mountain Warrior, Provincial Reconstruction Team Laghman, Afghanistan in October 2009, Airman First Class Jeffrey Leigh demonstrated gallantry and professionalism during an ambush by enemy forces against his convoy.

While Airman Leigh performed duties as a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected driver rifleman during a mounted patrol to Kotalay Village, three insurgents initiated a complex ambush in rugged mountainous terrain. The attack included a command wire improvised explosive device (CWIED) and effective AK-47 fire from an elevated position.

Immediately after the CWIED detonation, Airman Leigh assisted with the evacuation of the injured members of his team. Without regard for his own safety and ignoring the injuries he sustained in the CWIED blast, Airman Leigh proceeded on a 500 meter assault to locate the enemy forces. His tenacity contributed to his element locating the firing point of the CWIED, at which time Airman Leigh came under automatic small arms fire from an unknown location. In response, Airman Leigh established a secure, support-by-fire position to facilitate the advance of secondary friendly forces.

Airman Leigh's decisive actions caused the enemy forces to abandon their fighting positions and retreat. His actions were directly responsible for reversing the outcome of the engagement, providing protection of the casualty collection point, and enabling the safe recovery of an Afghan government official.

For his actions in Afghanistan, Airman Leigh earned the Army Commendation Medal with Valor and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.





**MASTER SERGEANT
KEITH O'GRADY**

**23RD SPECIAL TACTICS SQUADRON
PARARESCUEMAN AND TEAM LEADER**

In January 2010, Master Sergeant Keith O'Grady led a five-man team of three other Pararescuemen and one Medical Technician into the earthquake devastated country of Haiti. His team was part of the first group of United States military responders to arrive on the island just 26 hours after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck.

Sergeant O'Grady's squad spent the first 36 hours after their arrival searching relentlessly around Port-au-Prince, with little rest and no sleep. Sergeant O'Grady then initiated a relationship with the Fairfax County Virginia Urban Search and Rescue Team, the premier civilian rescue force on the ground. For eight days, Sergeant O'Grady and his expanded team worked in concert to extricate earthquake victims from the rubble. Some of the operations lasted over 30 hours, with victims heavily entombed within collapsed concrete structures. Sergeant O'Grady and his team regularly risked their lives by crawling for miles with concrete breakers, digging bars, and their bare hands to reach stranded victims. The tunnels in which they operated were extremely dangerous, susceptible to secondary collapse from both undermining and recurring aftershocks.

Sergeant O'Grady's team is credited with 13 technical rescues of people buried alive under tons of rubble, advanced medical care of 27 patients, and the transfer of 18 patients to trauma centers. The last individual the team rescued, they actually saved twice—first by extricating her from a collapsed university building, then by forcefully navigating through gridlocked traffic to transport her to an Israeli field hospital.

For his heroic actions, Master Sergeant O'Grady was nominated for an Airman's Medal and earned the Humanitarian Service Medal.

I am an American Airman;

Wingman,

Leader, Warrior.

I will never
leave an

Airman behind,

I WILL NEVER FALTER,

Captain Eric Quidley deployed as the lead logistician for the 2nd Brigade, 205th Corps, on the outskirts of Qalat, in Zabul Province, Afghanistan.

While deployed, Captain Quidley trained over 3,000 Afghanistan National Army personnel on logistics operations. In addition, he logged more than 4,000 miles of convoy duty and supported 60 combat operations. Directing convoys on mostly unpaved, treacherous terrain, Captain Quidley was frequently the target of insurgent small arms, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and mortar fire, as well as at risk from improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In an effort to reduce casualties, Coalition military leaders considered establishing an additional forward operating base (FOB) 30 kilometers north of FOB Apache. Captain Quidley and his executive officer loaded into a package comprised of two gun trucks and headed to the proposed area to conduct a site survey. The pair completed the survey without incident and began the trek home with Captain Quidley driving the lead vehicle. Shortly into the journey, the pair spotted a 30-vehicle civilian convoy stopped alongside the road. The two Afghan Security Guard (ASG) trucks at the front of the convoy were caught in an ambush, with one guard killed and several others wounded.

Despite numerous threats to his personal safety, Captain Quidley courageously sped his vehicle toward the enemy forces, causing them to retreat. Outgunned and outmanned, Captain Quidley then maneuvered his vehicle between the enemy forces and the convoy, shielding the bullet-ridden ASG trucks from further barrage.

Captain Quidley's selfless actions preserved the lives in the convoy and helped strengthen relations between the United States and Afghanistan. For his gallantry while deployed, Captain Quidley received the Bronze Star Medal.



CAPTAIN
ERIC QUIDLEY

2ND BRIGADE, 205TH CORPS
LOGISTICS OPERATIONS OFFICER



**FIRST LIEUTENANT
ROSLYN SCHULTE**

**COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN
INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS OFFICER**

First Lieutenant Roslyn Schulte deployed to Afghanistan in February 2009 as a member of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan. As the command's foreign disclosure officer, she was the main conduit for sharing intelligence with Afghan military officials.

Lieutenant Schulte worked tirelessly to improve information sharing among Afghan forces. This task often required her to travel outside of her main base at Camp Eggers in Kabul, to more remote parts of the region. Intensely focused on the goal of helping the Afghan military achieve self-sufficiency, Lieutenant Schulte willingly accepted the risks of frequent travel across this dangerous terrain. She also embodied the core value of service before self, as she dedicated three hours nearly every day to organizing a charity for Afghan refugees.

Lieutenant Schulte was killed on May 20, 2009 when an improvised explosive device struck her vehicle. For her remarkable efforts to teach Afghan military officials how to gather and interpret military intelligence, Lieutenant Schulte was posthumously awarded the National Intelligence Medal for Valor and the Purple Heart Medal. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) established the Medal for Valor in 2008 to acknowledge the extraordinary accomplishments of Intelligence Community professionals.

While awarding the Medal for Valor to Lieutenant Schulte, former DNI Dennis Blair noted that Schulte "made a far-reaching impact on how intelligence was taught and shared with the Afghan National Army." DNI Blair further noted that Lieutenant Schulte was "wise beyond her 25 years, and respected as a leader by all those around her – from general to Airman to Afghan tribal leader – regardless of the branch of service, regardless of nationality."

Senior Airman Bradley Smith deployed to Afghanistan as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller in December 2009.

On January 3, 2010, Airman Smith was on a thirteen-person, dismounted area reconnaissance patrol in the vicinity of Kandahar. After arriving at a local village, Airman Smith assumed a support-by-fire position with the patrol's Alpha team, while Bravo team traversed a bridge toward the village. After crossing the bridge, an 82mm mortar round impacted 10 meters from Bravo team. Seconds later, an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated, instantly killing two Soldiers and seriously wounding an Airman. The blast launched two of the casualties into an adjacent creek and a third mortally-wounded serviceman across the village. Without regard for his own safety, Airman Smith immediately rushed from his covered position into the waist-high water of the creek, in an effort to save one service member and recover the remains of the fallen.

After moving the victims from the creek to a casualty collection point, Airman Smith focused on gathering the remains of the deceased member in the village. The patrol leader requested volunteers for the recovery operation; Airman Smith and the platoon medic were the first to step forward. Airman Smith proceeded along the eastern edge of the village, where he retrieved portions of the remains and began maneuvering back to the extraction site. As Airman Smith arrived at the casualty collection point, a second IED exploded. The results of this explosion were catastrophic, killing Airman Smith and the platoon medic instantly.

For his selfless and valorous actions, Senior Airman Smith was posthumously nominated for the Silver Star and received the Purple Heart Medal.





STAFF SERGEANT
ALEXANDER YESSAYAN

ARMY PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM PAKTYA
COMBAT COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST

It was an unusually bitter cold November afternoon in Afghanistan as Staff Sergeant Alexander Yessayan rode in the turret of his Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, keeping alert for potential contacts. Sergeant Yessayan was part of Army Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Paktya, comprised of approximately 50 Soldiers and 25 Airmen. On that day, the PRT was conducting route reconnaissance to find a better way to access a remote village in the Zormat District.

As the five-vehicle convoy exited a streambed, Taliban fighters ambushed the team with precise mortar fire. As the mortars rained around the convoy, additional fighters engaged the convoy with AK-47s, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and other small arms fire. Unfazed by the mortars' impact, Sergeant Yessayan determined the gunfire was coming from the tree line on his left flank; he quickly responded with suppression fire from his M240B machine gun, causing the Taliban fighters to desist.

As the convoy turned back for reinforcements, an RPG was fired at Sergeant Yessayan's vehicle, prompting accurate fire from his M240B. Shortly into the exchange, however, the machine gun malfunctioned. Sergeant Yessayan calmly transitioned from his broken M240B to his M4/M203. He spied an oncoming three-man team of insurgents, carefully aimed his M203, and sent a 40mm round flying towards the trio. The resulting impact eliminated the threat.

Due in part to Sergeant Yessayan's alertness and ability to adapt to a rapidly changing situation, the convoy exited the area with minimal injuries and damages. For his actions, Sergeant Yessayan was awarded the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Army Combat Action Badge, the Army Achievement Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal.

And I
will

not fail.

DEVOTION

Values

“ AND ALL OF YOU REPRESENT THE VIRTUES AND THE VALUES THAT AMERICA SO DESPERATELY NEEDS RIGHT NOW: SACRIFICE AND SELFLESSNESS, HONOR AND DECENCY. THAT’S WHY YOU’RE HERE TODAY. THAT’S WHAT YOU REPRESENT.”

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA
SPEAKING TO A GATHERING OF JOINT FORCES AT BAGRAM AIRFIELD,
MARCH 28, 2010

Selflessness

Sacrifice

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FOR INFORMATION REGARDING PORTRAITS IN COURAGE,
PLEASE CONTACT AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ENGAGEMENT DIVISION,
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Note: Some of the Airmen in this publication are wearing the Army Combat Uniform. All are in compliance with United States Air Forces Central’s uniform policy.



U.S. AIR FORCE