

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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PORTRAITS  
IN COURAGE

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# THE CHIEF OF STAFF'S

## PORTRAITS IN COURAGE

It has been said that actions speak louder than words, and that even the most powerful words cannot genuinely capture the sacrifices of our deployed Airmen. Even so, reading and thinking about their stories offer to all Airmen the occasion to pause and reflect on honor and heroism.

With this in mind, we are honored to present the sixth volume of Portraits in Courage—a compilation of narratives highlighting 18 brave Airmen who put service before self. This edition augments the individual vignettes with an extended narrative that demonstrates the teamwork that these heroes routinely practice. Whether risking life or limb to call in air strikes, deftly disarming improvised explosive devices, running through a gauntlet of enemy fire or tirelessly providing humanitarian support, the Airmen who are showcased here exemplify the warrior ethos.

Although they represent only a cross-section of our Air Force, these Airmen demonstrate the character of our citizens who answer the call of duty by volunteering to serve our Nation in a time of conflict. Because valor has no expiration date and courage is timeless, it is our hope that these stories will inspire future generations of men and women to also undertake noble service to our country. Please join us in reflecting on their courageous efforts to ensure that all Americans remain safe and continue to be free.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "NASchwartz".

NORTON A. SCHWARTZ  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James A. Roy".

JAMES A. ROY  
Chief Master Sergeant  
of the Air Force

# ONE TEAM — ONE FIGHT

**FALLEN ANGEL:** Behind each courageous Airman is a team - determined, driven, and committed to succeed.

Story by: **Captain Erick Saks**

“ We’ve got a motto for a reason: these things we do that others may live, ”

Technical Sergeant James Davis said somewhat casually, just days after risking his life to save two Army helicopter pilots from an unforgiving valley in Afghanistan.

Along with his crew, Sergeant Davis makes up an elite group of Airmen who serve as Combat Search and Rescue Aircrews – the professionals who go in with helicopters, hoists, and guns, putting their lives on the line to save others in hostile situations. He deployed to Afghanistan as an HH-60 Pave Hawk flight engineer, manning a 50-caliber machine gun and operating the hoist on the helicopter.

On April 23, 2011, Sergeant Davis would be part of a harrowing rescue mission that would test the courage, endurance and limits of all involved.

## FALLEN ANGEL

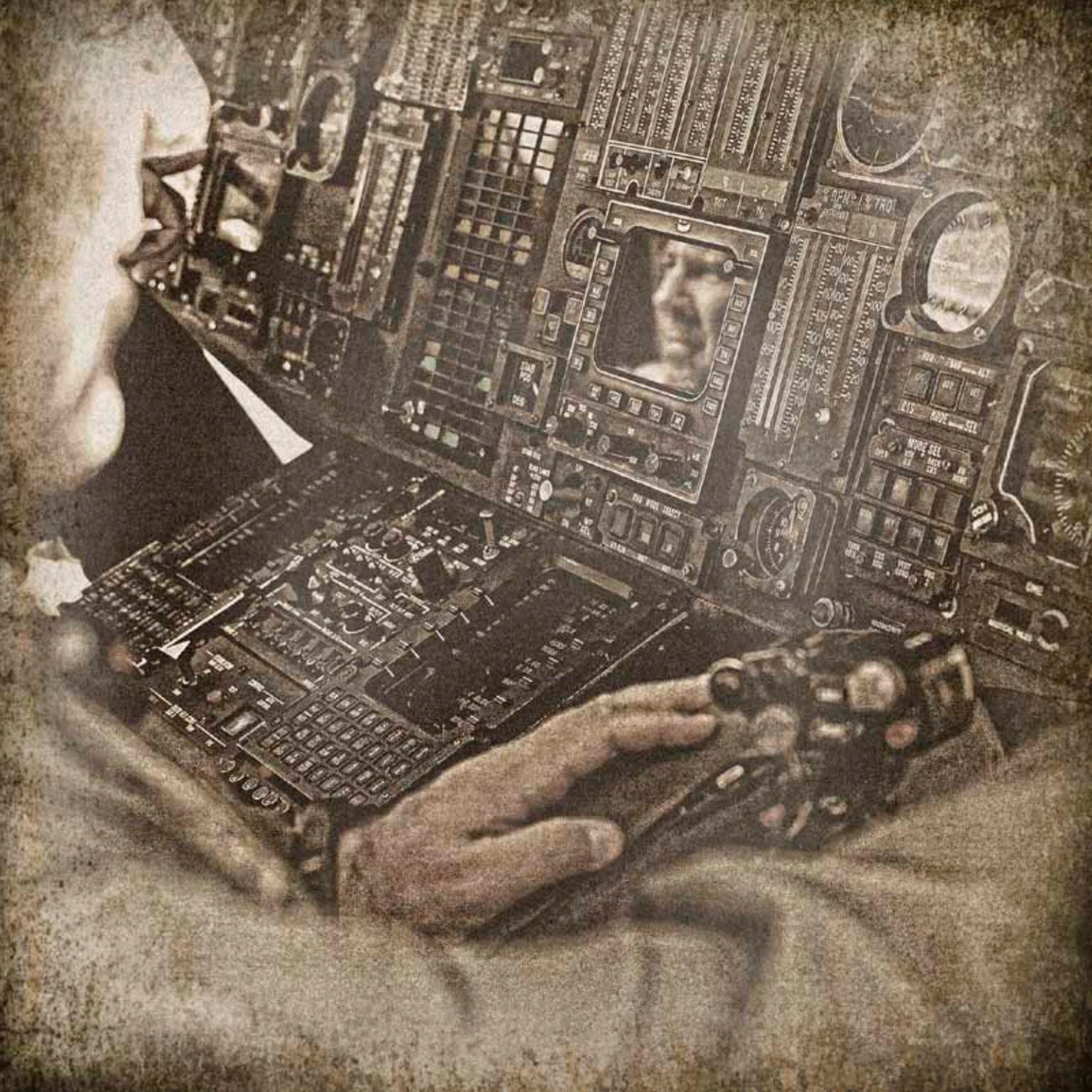
The situation began prior to daybreak, when Bagram Airfield’s operations center received a report of a Fallen Angel – a term signifying a downed aircraft. Within 10 minutes, Pedro 83 and 84, two HH-60 Pave Hawk aircraft, were airborne and en route to the site. Once on-scene they linked up with other aircraft in the area: USAF F-15E Strike Eagle fighters, US Army AH-64 Apache helicopters, and OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters.

The Apaches used a laser to point out the location of one of the pilots. “At this time, we had thought that the pilots were collocated, and that they’d egressed (escaped) together from the aircraft,” said Captain Louis Nolting, the Pedro 84 co-pilot.

But they hadn’t. One of the pilots had climbed several hundred feet up a mountainous ridgeline above the crash; the other was reported to still be at the site – unconscious.

Pedro 83 dropped its pararescuemen (PJ) team down to the pilot on the ridgeline and Pedro 84 inserted its team near the wreckage to help the other. The steep terrain forced the Pedro 84 PJ team down a harrowing 180-foot hoist-assisted descent to get to the site. Unfortunately, upon arrival, they discovered the second pilot had died from his wounds.

After recovering the pilots, the PJ teams prepared for immediate extraction. But a difficult situation was about to get worse.



## “I’M BLEEDING PRETTY GOOD HERE”

Overhead, Sergeant Davis, onboard Pedro 84, retrieved the hoist cable and was moving back into position when the rescue team began to take fire.

“Not more than two seconds after forward momentum was executed ... pop shots,” said Staff Sergeant William Gonzalez, Pedro 84 gunner. “The first thing we start doing is checking to see where it’s coming from and checking everybody out. And, maybe five seconds later the (flight engineer) says, ‘I’m hit.’”

A round had come right through the side of the helicopter hitting Sergeant Davis in the leg. “They asked, ‘Are you all right, Jim?’ and I said, ‘No I’m bleeding pretty good here,’” Sergeant Davis remembered.

“I looked back, and the first thing I saw was a pool of blood by his seat,” Sergeant Gonzalez said. “I went over to assess his situation. He was still conscious. He was still breathing. I put his tourniquet right above the wound. [Then] I went over to the PJ’s medical kit and grabbed some gauze, and I wrapped it around the leg to absorb as much blood as I could.”

Sergeant Davis needed medical attention and fast. Pedro 84 had no choice; they had to return to base. With Pedro 83 and the other aircraft remaining at the crash site, they headed back at maximum speed, leaving their PJ team of Staff Sergeant Zachary Kline and Staff Sergeant Bill Cenna on the ground with the fallen pilot.

## QUICK TURN

Technical Sergeant Heath Culbertson awoke to frantic knocking on his door. He was in crew rest status, sleeping at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

“They said, ‘Get up, we need you in the TOC (Terminal Operations Center) now,’” Sergeant Culbertson said. “I asked, ‘What’s going on?’ and they said, ‘Davis has been shot.’”

He sprang to action, but the reality of the situation did not hit him until he got to the aircraft. “As soon as I got underneath the rotor, I saw the blood,” he remembered. “It was pretty surreal. I’d seen blood before in the cabin, but never from any of our own guys. That was pretty shocking to me.”

The crew swap took less than four minutes. Sergeant Culbertson and the rest of the Pedro 84 crew raced back to the crash site.

## BACK ON THE RIDGE

Back on the ridge above the crash site, the second PJ team, Major Jesse Peterson and Technical Sergeants Chris Uriate and Shane Hargis, treated the injured pilot and prepared for extraction. Major Peterson, the team commander, coordinated with Pedro 83 for pick-up and passed information about the situation on the ground. The pilot was stable, but the clock was ticking and enemy fighters swarmed just below the ridgeline. Overhead, Pedro 83 swept the area, searching for the enemy.

“As we came around, I saw rounds come up so I returned fire,” said Senior Airman Justin Tite, Pedro 83’s door gunner. “There were no other trees on the slope except this one huge tree right in the middle between the two teams, and that’s where they were hiding.”

The two PJ teams’ positions were split by the enemy in the middle. There would be no link-up before extraction.

As enemy fire intensified, Pedro 83’s pilot, Captain Joshua Hallada, decided they needed to get the PJ team and the pilot off the ground as soon as possible. “We set ourselves up to come in for a hover. Being that it [the helicopter] was a little lighter now, we brought it 20-feet over our team and the survivor,” he said.

Quickly they lowered the hoist, but as the PJs and the flight engineer worked to get the survivor into the aircraft, enemy fire erupted.

A hot landing zone was getting hotter.

## CUTTING THE LINE

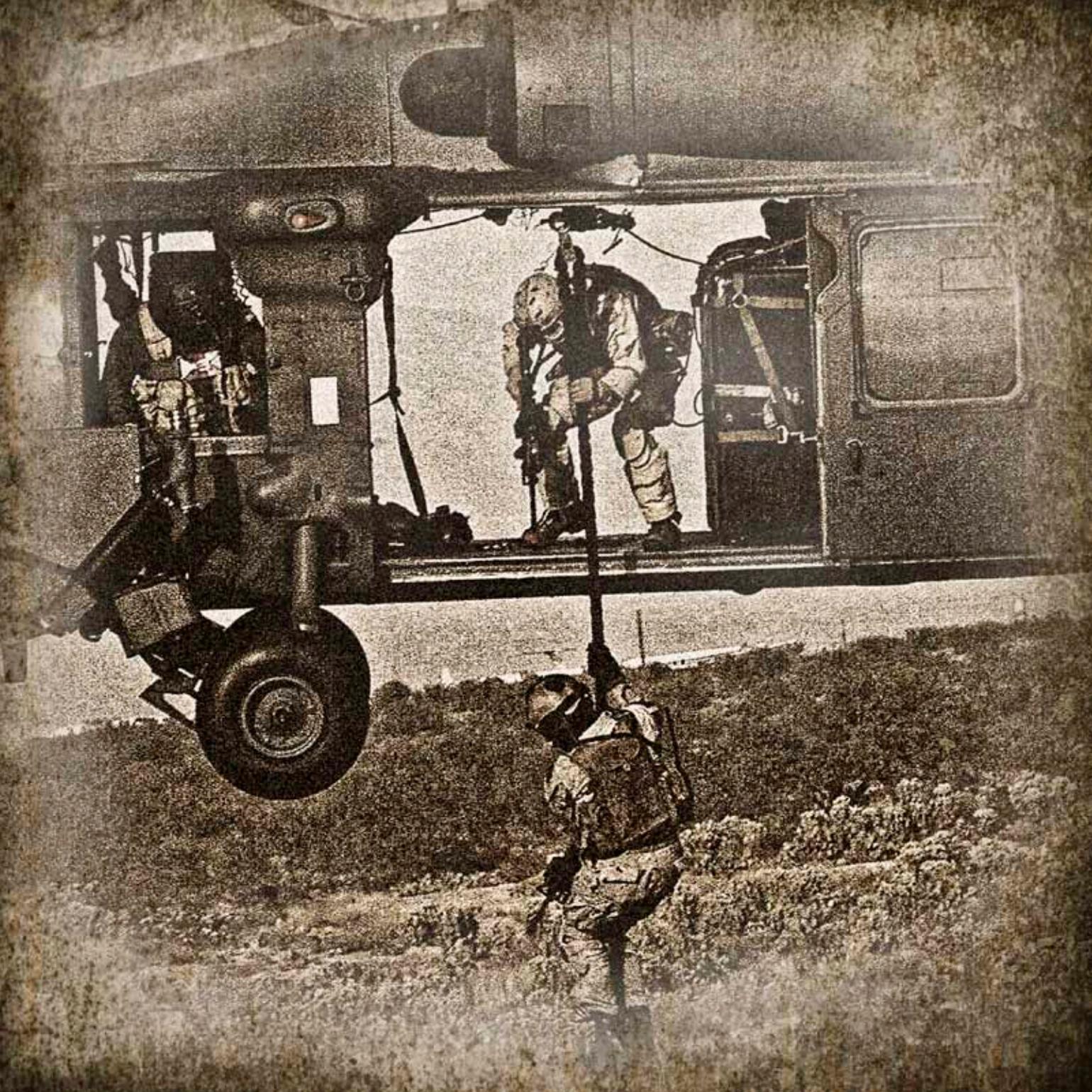
“The team started to hook up the survivor and that’s when the pilot started to call rounds off the one o’clock,” said Senior Airman Michael Price, the Pedro 83 flight engineer. Airman Price had a tough decision to make.

“I sheared the cable to stop from dragging them through the rocks,” he said.

Airman Price used the guillotine-type device built into the hoist to cut the cable. It was a tough call to make, but his actions prevented further injury to the Airmen below.

Down below, Sergeant Hargis, a PJ team member, was strapped into the hoist with the surviving pilot. “I gave them the signal to bring up the cable, and I noticed a little more slack coming out. I thought maybe he didn’t see me so I gave him the signal again and the next thing I know, the cable’s sheared,” he said.





With Pedro 84 off-station, a sheared hoist, and enemy fire increasing, the situation was deteriorating. Captain Hallada acted fast. Using a one-wheel hover, he positioned the helicopter beside the ridgeline, allowing the PJs and downed pilot to jump on. In just 10 seconds everyone was on board and they took off, but it wasn't fast enough.

"We went back into our overwatch patterns, realizing we'd been hit," Captain Hallada said.

The helicopter was struck by enemy fire. Damaged, running low on fuel and without a hoist, Pedro 83 was in a perilous situation. However, they decided to remain on the scene to provide cover to the second PJ team and pilot still on the ground. After several harrowing moments, they heard that Pedro 84 was on its way back, and they immediately left to refuel and rearm.

Once on the ground at Bagram, the PJs transferred the injured pilot to the field surgical team while Airman Price looked over the aircraft to evaluate the damage. Upon first glance, it appeared minimal. Then he checked the main transmission fluid – bone-dry, yet the Pave Hawk had brought them all back safely. The aircraft would not fly again that day.

The crew needed to find a spare aircraft and fast. In a whirlwind coordination effort, they secured another helicopter at a separate base and brought it back to rejoin the fight.

## PEDRO LINKUP

Back on scene at the crash, Pedro 84 arrived to find close air support had joined the fight. Four USAF A-10 Warthogs circled overhead and three Army AH-64 Apaches were firing at enemy forces. However, the insurgents would not relinquish the fight.

Pedro 84 made an attempt to extract the PJs and fallen pilot. They teamed with an Army Apache helicopter and moved to the landing zone. While guiding the pilots down for landing, Sergeant Culbertson began to hear what he thought may be gunfire. "I heard whistling by my head," he said. "But, I thought to myself, 'That can't be. I've got my helmet on. There's no way I'm hearing the hisses.'"

Seconds later, Sergeant Culbertson heard impacts on the aircraft and realized they were indeed under enemy fire. He began searching for the source. "Next thing I know, I get thrown on my console," he said. "I still didn't know what was going on at that point. But from this vantage point, I could see under my gun, and I could see the muzzle flashes. I remember shaking my head to clear it, and then just a rage of fury came over me. I called for the go around, turned the gun power switch on, and just started unleashing the .50-cal on these two points of origin," he said.

Later, Sergeant Culbertson would learn a bullet had entered the right side of his helmet, through his visor and exited the other side of the helmet without injuring him.

Though it seemed like slow motion, it all took place in about four seconds. Captain Nolting credits Sergeant Culbertson's quick and collected response to saving the aircraft. "Without him returning that fire, there was a chance that our right engine or hydraulics could have been shot out," he said.

With plenty of air support on scene to protect the team on the ground, Pedro 84 once again returned to base to refuel. On the ground they looked over the damage to their aircraft. Then they realized that not only had Sergeant Culbertson been hit, but so had Sergeant Gonzalez.

"I initially counted seven rounds that had impacted the cabin," Sergeant Gonzalez said. "And then, I noticed the one that was under my seat. It had come from under my seat and fragged outward. One piece missed my right knee, and the other actually bounced off my knee and went through my knee pad."

But neither injury nor damage would keep the Pedro 84 crew away. The helicopter was still airworthy and the crew prepped to return to battle.

## FIREWORKS AT THE CRASH SITE

Back at the crash site, Sergeants Kline and Cessna hunkered down by the wreckage waiting for the Pave Hawks to return. In time they started taking enemy fire. The aircraft above provided cover, but the PJs knew they had to find an escape route. A ravine 25 meters away was their only out.

Increasingly hostile fire made the decision for them.

"It felt like 30 rounds were all around us all within a two- to four-second period. They just hit everywhere," Sergeant Kline said. "They hit the aircraft, and it went up in flames. It quickly overtook the aircraft, and I yelled at (Sergeant Cenna) to get the hell out of there. I had noticed during my initial scan of the aircraft that there was still a rocket pod with rockets in it. That was my concern; that it was going to be like the Fourth of July."

As predicted, moments later the crashed helicopter exploded. The PJs sprinted to the ravine as enemy gunfire erupted around them. On the radio, aircraft overhead provided updates about the enemy who was quickly closing in on their position.

"They were like, 'There are these guys 300 meters to the north of you; we're going to go hot on them.' We could feel the concussion from the rockets," remembered Sergeant Kline.

## ANOTHER CASUALTY

Pedro 83 had returned to Bagram Air Field and together again with Pedro 84, the crews left to recover their PJs and the fallen pilot. Upon returning to the scene, the crews were alerted to another soldier in need of medical attention. While they were off-site, an Army quick reaction force had arrived on the scene to help, only to suffer casualties before landing.

An RPG explosion hit one member of the QRF, who died within minutes of the call. Another soldier had been hit and required immediate medical attention.

Two Apaches joined the Pedro Pave Hawks, creating a four-ship rescue formation. The helos moved towards the medical evacuation landing zone. Yet the number of enemies on the ground and firepower they wielded proved almost impossible to overcome.

During the first attempt to land, Pedro 84 began descending into the ravine as the other three aircraft provided cover.

"As we got down to about 30 feet, Sergeant Gonzalez and I starting seeing muzzle flashes from this one building 200 to 300 feet from us," Captain Louis Nolting, Pedro 84's pilot, described.

The gunfire forced a go-around. Captain Nolting worked to get the aircraft out of the valley, while the flight engineer and PJs onboard engaged targets in the building. Barely skimming over wires strung along the valley, the captain flew Pedro 84 out the zone. They formed back up for another pass.

In the meantime, Pedro 83 moved in to attempt an extraction.

"As we were about to set down, we were engaged, and all of the aircraft returned fire, including the Apaches," Captain Hallada said. Extraction would not be possible.

"As we took off, I immediately saw the wires out the windscreen, and I pulled everything the rotor system had to get over them," Captain Hallada said.

Finally, after a third unsuccessful attempt, the crews succeeded with the help of a heavily-armed Apache on the fourth try. Pedro 83 extracted the injured soldier. They also saw a golden opportunity to get their PJs.



## EXTRACTION

In all the chaos, Pedro 84's hoist had broken. There was still a chance it would work in backup mode. It would run very slowly, but it was the only option.

"I said a little prayer," said Sergeant Culbertson, on Pedro 84, as he lowered the cable. "And it worked."

Even though the PJ team had been on the ground for more than five hours, they chose to ensure the fallen pilot made it home. The PJs strapped the pilot to the hoist first without hesitation. For Sergeant Kline, the decision was easy.

"We were going to do everything in our power to get him back," he said. "If I had to clip in and hold him, I would have. There was no way he wasn't coming back."

Slowly the cable crept back up towards Sergeant Culbertson in the helicopter above. After what seemed like an eternity, their fallen comrade was on board.

"By this time, I was expecting for us to get shot down," Captain Nolting said. "We'd been there so long. I truly expected we were going down." But for the first time that day, the aircraft did not take any fire, and Pedro 84 extracted the remaining PJs and evacuated the area.

No one was left behind.

## IT'S WHAT WE DO

Despite all the setbacks, the rescue team had accomplished what they set out to do in the morning – bring back the downed pilots.

Prior to departing to be treated at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, Sergeant Davis reflected on the mission that day and expressed his pride in the actions of the crews of Pedro 83 and Pedro 84.

"We did what we do," Sergeant Davis said. "We've got a motto for a reason: these things we do that others may live."

# VALOR



I am going on a raid this afternoon...there is a possibility I won't return...do not worry about me as everyone has to leave this earth one way or another, and this is the way I have selected.

If, after this terrible war is over, the world emerges a saner place...persecutions halted, then, I'm glad I gave my efforts with the thousands of others for such a cause."

**Sergeant Carl Goldman**, U.S. Army Air Forces WWII B-17 Gunner, Killed in Action over Western Europe, in a letter to his parents



**Technical Sergeant**  
**DUSTIN GOODWIN**  
Security Forces  
48<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Squadron  
Lakenheath Air Base, United Kingdom

In November 2010, while deployed to a forward operating base in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, on a joint tasking with the Army, Technical Sergeant **DUSTIN GOODWIN** repelled a three-hour complex attack against his base.

Twenty enemy insurgents armed with rocket-propelled grenades, PG-7s, AK-47s, PKM light machine guns, hand grenades, and suicide vests stormed the outer base perimeter. One RPG exploded directly in front of Sergeant Goodwin on the perimeter wall. Unfazed, Sergeant Goodwin engaged the enemy and killed one fighter armed with an AK-47 rifle. Moments later, enemy fighters just 10 meters from Sergeant Goodwin and his team threw a hand grenade which landed and exploded just to the rear of their position. The blast threw the entire fire team against the perimeter wall. They were then attacked with more than 200 rounds of enemy fire. Despite being dazed from the explosion, Sergeant Goodwin and his team continued to engage the enemy and repel the attack. Soon another explosion, this time from an RPG, detonated against the wall by Sergeant Goodwin. Again, there was another onslaught of enemy fire. Sergeant Goodwin and his fire team stood fast until an enemy hand grenade was thrown over the wall, wounding four U.S. forces, including two of from Sergeant Goodwin's team.

Recognizing the situation was becoming more dangerous by the moment, Sergeant Goodwin risked his life by leaning over the wall, engaging and killing the two enemy fighters below who had thrown the hand grenades. Now with some breathing room, he teamed with his U.S. Army counterparts and radioed for close air support. A "Danger Close" situation was authorized, and Apache Helicopters engaged the enemy, as close as 10 meters from Sergeant Goodwin's position. At last, the enemy was defeated and the base perimeter held fast.

Sergeant Goodwin's leadership and courage under fire turned the tide of the battle. The after action report revealed that enemy forces still had more than 26 hand grenades, three RPG-7s, 20 PG-7s, four AK-47s, three PKMs and five suicide vests. Sergeant Goodwin's position was credited with nine enemy personnel killed. Sergeant Goodwin was personally credited with three.

For his extraordinary actions, dedication to mission accomplishment, and service to his country, Sergeant Goodwin was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Air Force Combat Action Medal, and the Army Combat Action Badge.

In October 2010, Staff Sergeant **BRANDON HILL** deployed to Afghanistan for the second time in six months. Sergeant Hill and his crew, call sign Pedro 83, flew personnel recovery and casualty evacuation missions in HH-60G Pave Hawk aircraft. In mid-November, Pedro 83 and its wingman, Pedro 84, pre-positioned in the Konar River valley to decrease reaction time. This move would prove to be a lifesaver.

On November 14, shortly after pre-positioning, Pedro 83 launched on a mass casualty evacuation mission near the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. The crew determined there were 11 wounded in intense fighting. Hostile rocket-propelled grenade and machine gun fire currently prevented evacuation of the wounded.

Trapped by steep rocky terrain and enemy fire, the ground forces faced ammunition shortages and mounting casualties. As Pedro 83 attempted to find a safe landing zone, the crew received more bad news: their primary refueling point had contaminated fuel. The mission was now a race against the clock.

Despite continued small arms and RPG fire, Pedro 83 committed to a landing. Sergeant Hill hoisted down the combat rescue officer and pararescueman, also known as PJs, to assess the casualty and tactical situation on the ground. RPGs exploded close by as the men worked.

For the next two hours Pedro 83 and Pedro 84 tirelessly rotated to refuel and rearm, airdropped quick-release water and ammunition to ground forces and coordinated airstrikes with nearby aircraft. Sergeant Hill provided suppressive fire after each supply run, protecting the PJs and casualties, as the crew dropped the critical supplies.

After four hours, Pedro 83 and 84 inserted additional PJs and extracted the remaining wounded. Sergeant Hill conducted two more hoists, both under fire, to extract three critically wounded patients.

Sergeant Hill and his teammates helped save the lives of seven wounded soldiers and returned four fallen warriors with honor. For his heroism, Sergeant Hill was nominated for a Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor.



**Staff Sergeant**  
**BRANDON HILL**  
Flight Engineer  
33<sup>rd</sup> Rescue Squadron  
Kadena Air Base, Japan



**Staff Sergeant**

**JORDAN JAKUBOWSKI**

Joint Terminal Attack Controller  
17<sup>th</sup> Air Support Operations Squadron  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

In August 2010, Staff Sergeant **JORDAN JAKUBOWSKI** deployed to Afghanistan to serve as the primary joint terminal attack controller for the International Security Assistance Force Commander in Afghanistan. His job was to direct airstrikes against known enemies. During his deployment, Sergeant Jakubowski conducted 22 separate missions, ten of which were associated with firefights lasting more than 24 hours each.

Two of those missions are indelibly etched into his mind.

On September 16, Sergeant Jakubowski's assault force was engaged by the enemy when a rocket-propelled grenade landed on his team's position. He was struck in the hand and leg by shrapnel, and two other members of his team were wounded. Despite his injuries, he continued to call in airstrikes against the enemy; nonetheless, they continued to advance. Sergeant Jakubowski engaged the enemy with his M-4 assault rifle while simultaneously controlling multiple Air Force A-10 Warthog attacks via the radio. With the pressing need for medical evacuation, Sergeant Jakubowski skillfully established a medical evacuation landing zone. His ability to multitask in extreme circumstances while injured kept the enemy from overrunning his team's position, helped save the lives of three soldiers, and in part accounted for the neutralization of 33 enemy combatants.

Just two weeks later, Sergeant Jakubowski and his team came under enemy attack yet again. A mortar landed inside his team's compound, killing one soldier and wounding 10 others. Despite the mass casualty situation, Sergeant Jakubowski remained calm, calling in airstrikes that included the dropping of multiple 2,000 pound bombs within "danger close" parameters of his team. With the cover of air support, he once again established a MEDEVAC landing zone. Over the course of this 30-hour fight, 35 insurgents were killed by close air support, due in large part to Sergeant Jakubowski's skills as a JTAC.

Throughout his deployment, Sergeant Jakubowski displayed courage under fire numerous times. His focus and technical expertise helped clear enemy-held territory in both southern and northern Afghanistan. For his heroic efforts he was awarded the Purple Heart, Joint Service Achievement Medal, and was nominated for the Bronze Star with Valor.

Staff Sergeant **YURI MILLER** deployed to Afghanistan for six months in February 2010 as a joint terminal attack controller attached to a U.S. special operations unit supporting the Afghan National Army in the Baghdis Province. On April 6, Sergeant Miller heroically fought enemy insurgents during a harrowing 10-hour firefight.

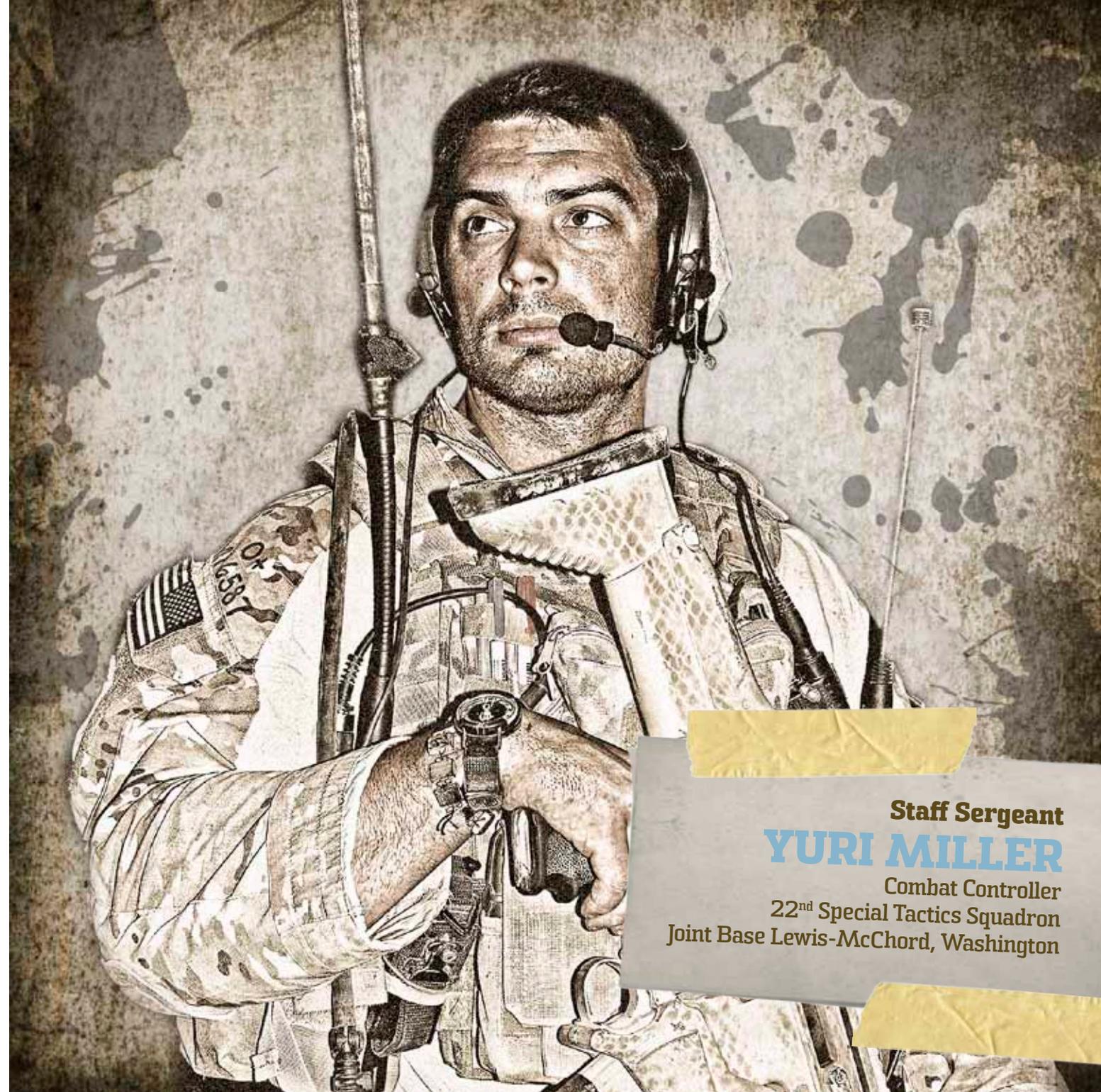
After completing a night reconnaissance mission, Sergeant Miller's patrol came under attack. Rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine-gun fire from a fortified compound engulfed the patrol. Despite deteriorating weather conditions, small-arms fire, and rocket explosions, Sergeant Miller calmly called for close air support and provided enemy locations to the aircraft above.

The patrol had suffered multiple casualties. In an effort to regain the offensive, Sergeant Miller and other patrol members moved into the enemy compound, engaging targets at close range. Fighting heroically, another teammate was injured inside the compound. Sergeant Miller bravely exposed his position and took out the enemy with his grenade launcher, allowing his patrol to evacuate and treat their injured teammate.

Discovering an extensive tunnel network, the commander realized the potential for further enemy reinforcements was great and he quickly decided to destroy the compound. Again under heavy fire, Sergeant Miller obtained grid coordinates for each tunnel entrance while simultaneously radioing an Air Force B-1 bomber into position for the attack.

Despite the bomber's attack, the team came under heavy fire from enemy reinforcements while performing a battle damage assessment. Sergeant Miller returned fire at the swarming insurgents, intermittently taking pictures of the damage. The enemy continued to arrive – over 200 strong – bringing heavy fire along with them. Recognizing five enemy locations, Sergeant Miller again called the B-1 in for an attack. With Sergeant Miller's precise coordinates, the bomber eliminated the threat.

Sergeant Miller's courageous actions and his ability to control airpower throughout this 10-hour engagement were decisive in killing more than 103 insurgents. Moreover, his valorous efforts singlehandedly saved the lives of 40 fellow service members. For his heroic efforts, he received the Bronze Star with Valor.



**Staff Sergeant**  
**YURI MILLER**  
Combat Controller  
22<sup>nd</sup> Special Tactics Squadron  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington



**Captain**  
**SALVATORE SFERRAZZA, JR.**  
Combat Rescue Officer  
38<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron  
Moody Air Force Base, Georgia

**SALVATORE SFERRAZZA JR.**, then a first lieutenant, deployed to Afghanistan from August 2010 to March 2011. Captain Sferrazza served as a Guardian Angel Team Commander, leading five pararescuemen.

He led his team during numerous personnel recovery and combat casualty evacuation missions, including a dive mission to recover a Marine blown into a canal by an improvised explosive device. His team also conducted the first blood transfusion by a Guardian Angel unit on board a helicopter, saving a Marine who had lost both legs.

But it was the mission on November 24, 2010 that would truly test Captain Sferrazza's mettle. That day, he faced one of his toughest missions—to rescue a Marine who had sustained a life-threatening gunshot wound while on dismounted patrol in the Helmand River valley. With the firefight still raging and no secure helicopter landing zone, Captain Sferrazza chose to insert his team in a remote location to reduce the aircraft's exposure to gunfire.

Once on the ground, Captain Sferrazza quickly led his team to the wounded Marine. He deftly navigated across 100 meters of open terrain with limited cover and no mine detection devices, positioning himself in front of his team to shield them from incoming fire. Reaching the injured Marine, Captain Sferrazza assisted his lead pararescue medic and quickly prepared the Marine for evacuation. All the while, he maintained radio contact with the insertion aircraft, sending vital updates about the ongoing firefight and threats on the ground. Once the Marine was ready for evacuation, he again led his team back through the harrowing 100-meter stretch of open terrain.

Captain Sferrazza's gallant actions and disregard for his own safety throughout the mission ensured the survival of the wounded Marine, but that single mission was only one highlight of his day-to-day work. Throughout his deployment, Captain Sferrazza flew 315 missions, saved 60 service members, and treated more than 450 others.

For his selfless actions and leadership, Captain Sferrazza was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal with Valor.

Staff Sergeant **DANIEL WARREN** deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in 2010 as a Guardian Angel team member of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Expeditionary Rescue Squadron.

During this deployment, the pararescueman flew numerous demanding rescue missions to recover coalition personnel and local Afghans.

One of Sergeant Warren's most demanding missions came on February 8, 2010. Several devastating avalanches had taken place along the Salang Pass, the only vehicle path in this area of the Hindu Kush.

Hundreds of Afghans were trapped in the buried vehicles, which had been thrown more than 600 meters into the valley. Most were pushed off the main road and had their windows blown out.

The terrain was treacherous along the 11,500-foot pass. Winds whipped at 30 to 40 knots per hour, and the temperatures had dipped to minus 20 degrees Celsius.

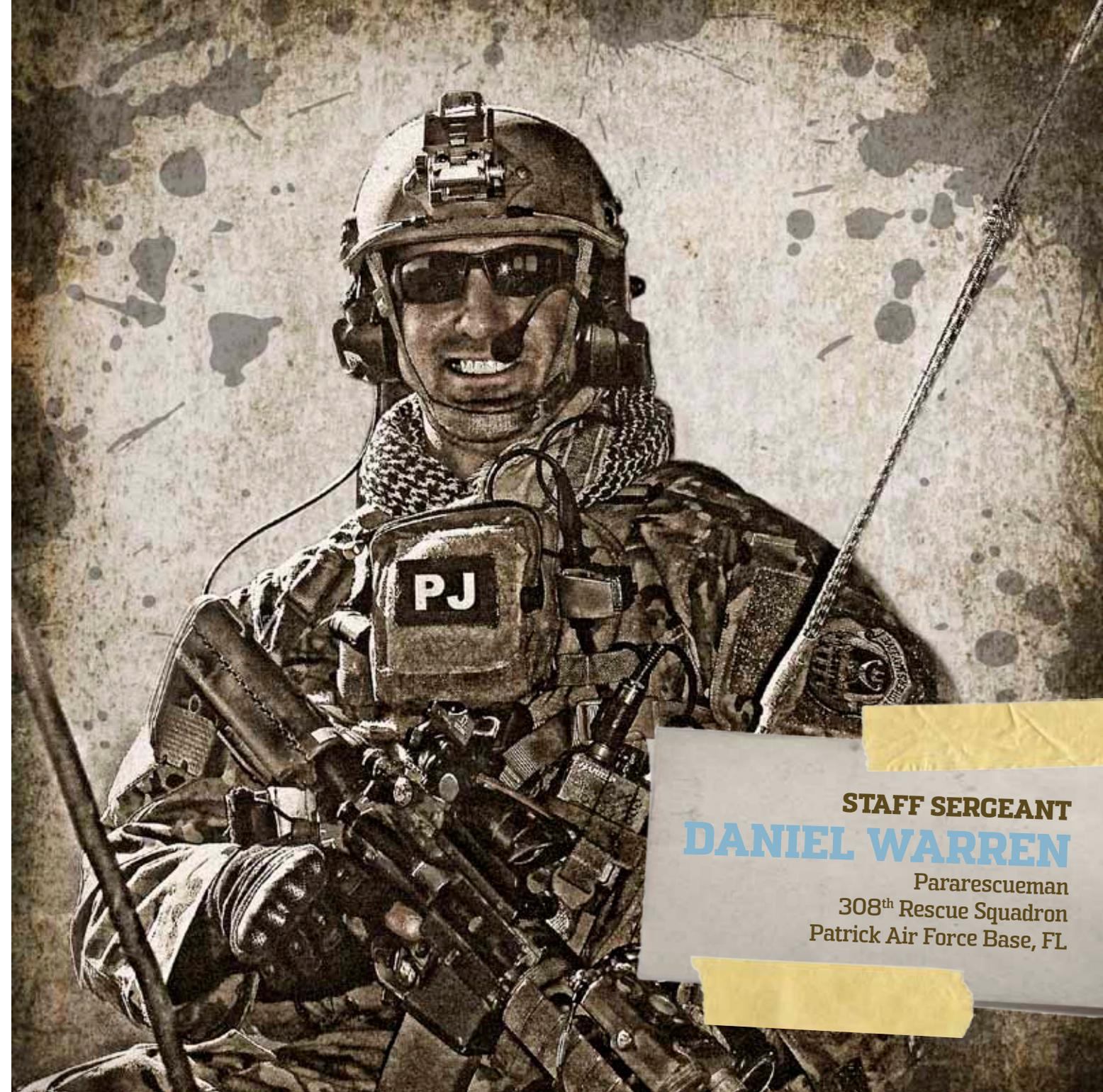
The potential for secondary avalanches and insurgent activity hampered the Guardian Angel team's mission to rescue and recover as many stranded people as possible.

After exiting the CH-47 helicopter, Sergeant Warren quickly moved to the numerous overturned and buried vehicles scattered down the mountain. Hundreds of stranded locals swarmed Sergeant Warren, only adding to the chaos. Under these dire circumstances, he spent the next five hours battling exhaustion from the hypoxic conditions, freezing temperatures, and high winds while moving from vehicle to vehicle, extricating and triaging as many people as he could.

Then, he began to evacuate the victims on the helicopters. During one of the evacuation flights back to Bagram Airfield, Sergeant Warren performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on one unconscious patient for approximately 30 minutes until he could pass the individual to advanced medical care.

Overall, Sergeant Warren and his team directly saved 15 lives and assisted 49 more with their rescue skills. This was lauded by senior military personnel as a great strategic victory for the United States by pulling 282 stranded Afghans out of this deadly environment, and thereby fostering civilian support for coalition forces.

For his efforts, Sergeant Warren was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal with Valor.



**STAFF SERGEANT**  
**DANIEL WARREN**  
Pararescueman  
308<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron  
Patrick Air Force Base, FL

# DEVOTION



What you have chosen to do for your country by devoting your life to the service of your country is the greatest contribution that any man could make."

**John F. Kennedy**, 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, June 6, 1961, from an address to United States Naval Academy graduating class



**Major**  
**MATTHEW ASTROTH**  
AC-130U Gunship Pilot  
1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Wing  
Hurlburt Field, Florida

During the twilight hours of March 17, 2010, Major **MATTHEW ASTROTH** and the crew of his AC-130U gunship, known as Spooky 01, covered the infiltration of a U.S. Special Operations team on a hillside in a remote, mountainous region of Afghanistan. After ensuring a safe infiltration, the gunship left to refuel.

Upon returning, they found the special operations team ready to assault the target. As the attack began, enemy gunfire erupted, critically wounding a team member. Major Astroth directed his crew to provide close air support as the team quickly extracted their wounded teammate from the battle. During the extraction an enemy grenade wounded another team member.

As the gunship crew fired their 40mm gun to hold back the enemy, they also began an airborne search for a helicopter landing zone to evacuate the injured team members. Some members of the ground team moved to a site that the gunship had located, but encountered machine gun fire from a tree line across the valley. Again the gunship provided cover, this time with deadly accurate 105mm cannon fire. While directing the rest of the ground forces toward the landing zone, the crew on Spooky 01 laid a curtain of fire on both slopes of the valley, while their 40mm fire continued to rain onto the first target. During the heated battle, an enemy sniper's round struck a ground team member, increasing the urgency for evacuation.

In response to this new threat, Major Astroth directed his crew to shift fire from the tree line to engage a fortified position with 105mm and 25mm fire. Simultaneously, an on-scene F-15E Strike Eagle delivered two precision-guided bombs through the gunship's orbit, finally allowing an opportunity for extraction.

With the wounded stabilized, all ground forces moved to the extraction site. Despite being low on fuel and close to sunrise, Spooky 01 remained onsite and continued suppressive fire. Their support allowed helicopters to move up the valley and extract the wounded warriors and the remainder of the team.

During a high-risk combat sortie that lasted more than 10 hours, Major Astroth and the rest of his gunship crew helped save 73 American lives with their unrelenting airpower. For his actions, Major Astroth was awarded the Aviation Valor Award in 2010.

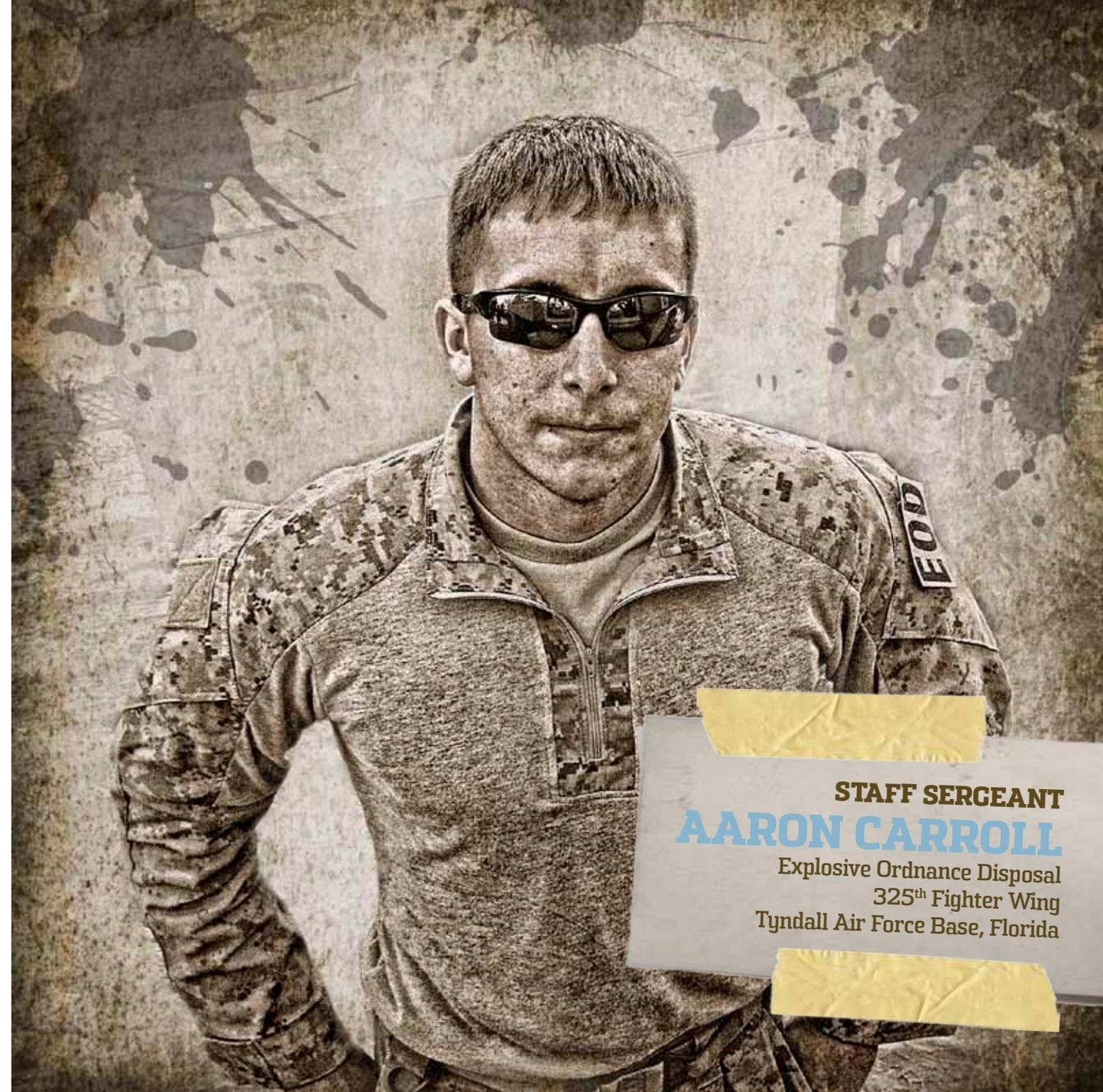
Staff Sergeant **AARON CARROLL** deployed to Afghanistan from August 2010 to January 2011 in support of a joint tasking with the Marines. On November 26, 2010, while conducting route clearance operations with the 2-6 Marines in Afghanistan, an improvised explosive device struck the convoy's number two vehicle. Sergeant Carroll and his team leader immediately dismounted and cleared a safe path to the struck vehicle.

After ensuring there were no life-threatening injuries, Sergeant Carroll began post-blast analysis. As he cleared the area around the vehicle, the Marines began searching areas off the road and collecting debris. They found a pressure plate. As Sergeant Carroll stood to look, yet another IED detonated. Only 15 feet behind him, a Marine had stepped on an IED. Sergeant Carroll rushed to his side.

Recognizing an entrapment scenario, the team leader immediately called for everyone to return to the road. Sergeant Carroll cleared the area to the injured Marine, ensuring there were no other IEDs. He talked to the grievously wounded Marine to ensure he remained conscious and began performing life-saving procedures. Sergeant Carroll reassured him that he was going to live and called for medical evacuation.

As Sergeant Carroll was applying a tourniquet to Marine's injured legs, another blast rocked the convoy. Just 20 feet away, another Marine had stepped on an IED. This blast knocked down the EOD team leader, necessitating Sergeant Carroll to assume chief duties. Sergeant Carroll cleared a second path, checking for additional IEDs. The blast had thrown the second Marine into the blast hole of the first IED and his injuries were much more extensive. Sergeant Carroll immediately called to the other EOD team member for assistance and after applying tourniquets to the Marine's legs, they patched a hole in his abdomen, secured his injured arm, and carried both Marines over 300 yards for evacuation.

Despite potentially life-threatening injuries, both Marines survived, due in large part to Sergeant Carroll's composure and quick actions under intensely violent conditions. For his actions, Sergeant Carroll was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.



**STAFF SERGEANT**  
**AARON CARROLL**  
Explosive Ordnance Disposal  
325<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing  
Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida



**Staff Sergeant**  
**DANIEL GONZALEZ**  
Security Forces Journeyman  
18<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Squadron  
Kadena Air Base, Japan

For Staff Sergeant **DANIEL GONZALEZ**, a security forces journeyman from Kadena Air Base, Japan, dangerous missions, protecting personnel, and safeguarding assets were all part of one day's work. While deployed to Southwest Asia as part of a security forces fly-away team in 2010, Sergeant Gonzalez flew more than 40 combat missions and oversaw more than 130 combat-related missions. His team safeguarded and transferred 12 high-value enemy combatants, contributing time-sensitive intelligence and aiding future counter-insurgency operations.

But it was flooding, not bullets or bombs, which proved to be the most challenging part of Sergeant Gonzalez's deployment.

In July 2010, Sergeant Gonzalez led his nine-man team on a short notice, high priority tasking to a flood-ravaged region of Pakistan. They were the first to arrive on scene and quickly sprung into action.

Sergeant Gonzalez's team worked under extreme conditions, with little to no sleep, to ensure the Pakistanis were supplied with necessities. They oversaw the safety and health of more than 200 Pakistanis evacuating from the region. Under Sergeant Gonzalez's direction, the team distributed critical food and medical supplies, located shelters, aided medical professionals, and evacuated locals. Sergeant Gonzalez's team also safeguarded the transportation of more than 100 tons of food, 20 tons of shelter material, and more than 60 personnel to the affected areas.

Under Sergeant Gonzalez's leadership and with the flexibility for which the U.S. Air Force is famous, this emergency humanitarian effort not only saved lives, but also strengthened the Nation's relationship with a key international partner.

For his actions, Sergeant Gonzalez was awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal.

In June 2010, Master Sergeant **BENJAMIN HORTON** deployed to Afghanistan as an explosive ordnance disposal team leader, where he faced challenges that tested both his EOD skills and his perseverance.

On his first mission, Sergeant Horton was working with a Marine unit in Helmand Province when multiple improvised explosive devices struck their convoy. Sergeant Horton braved the hazardous blast zone to help several injured Marines. He then cleared an area for a rescue helicopter to land and evacuate the Marines to safety.

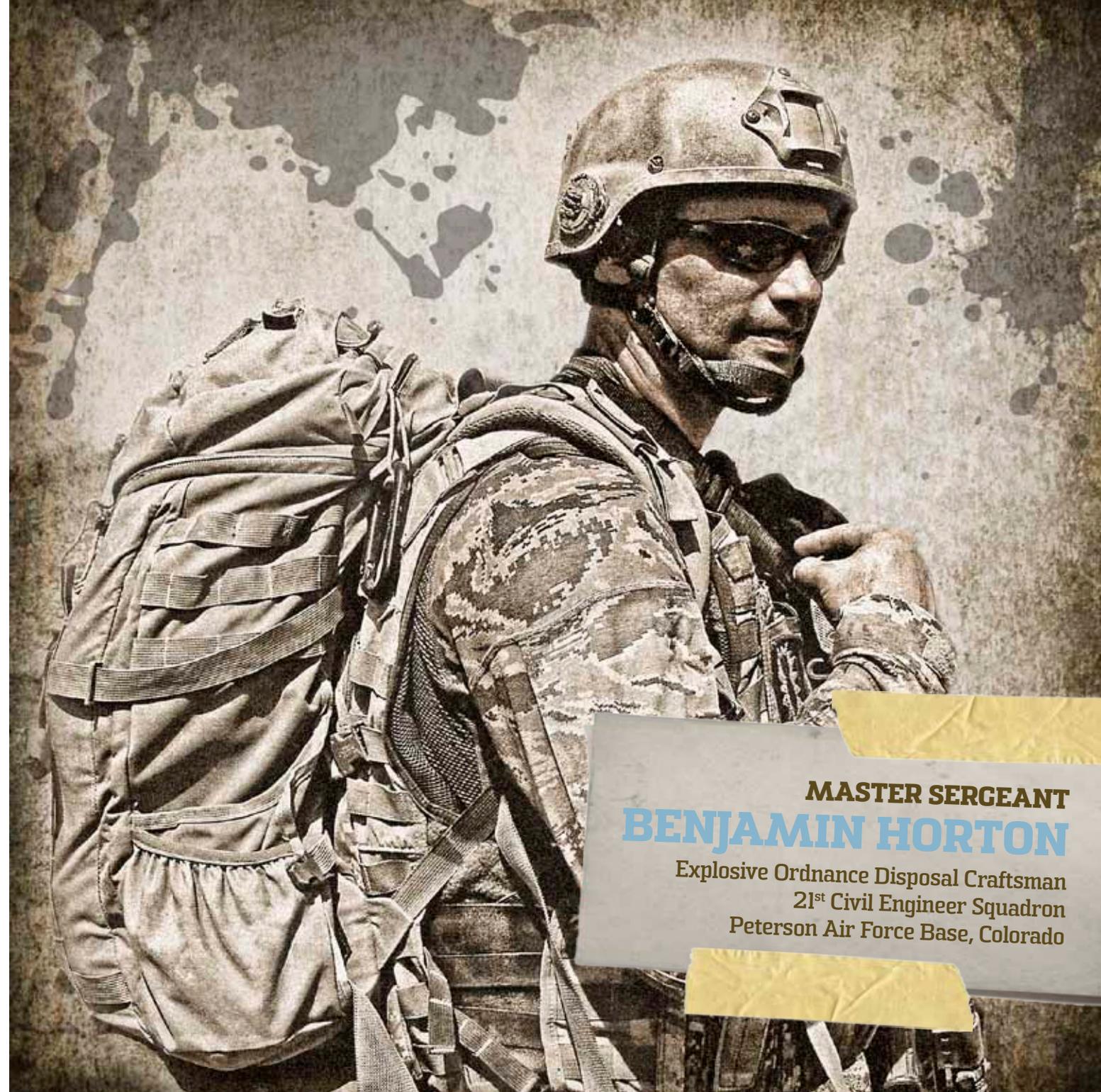
During his second mission, another IED struck his team. The blast killed one Marine and injured both of Sergeant Horton's EOD team members. Again Sergeant Horton braved the blast zone to recover the remains of the fallen Marine. Despite danger and physical trauma, Sergeant Horton worked tirelessly for four days, disarming nine IEDs and enabling recovery forces to reach his team.

On Sept. 22, Sergeant Horton joined a British High Reaction Force mission to recover weapons and conduct a blast analysis from an earlier incident. He entered a series of enemy-controlled compounds where he discovered five IEDs. While trying to navigate the booby-trapped area, he was called over by a teammate to verify a clear path into the next compound. Unknown to both men, they were standing on an IED.

Moments later, it exploded.

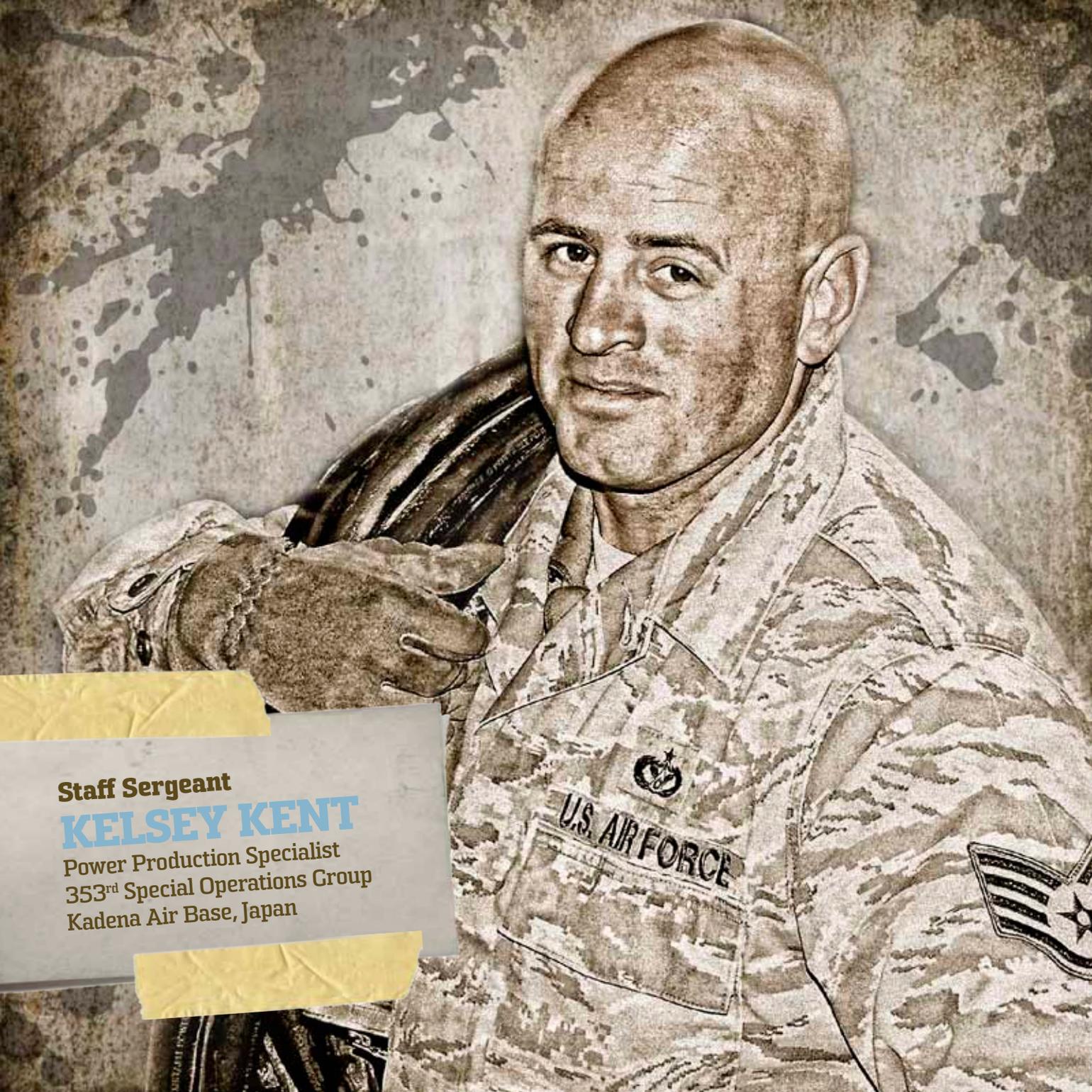
Sergeant Horton was thrown several feet. Temporarily blinded, deafened, and critically injured, Sergeant Horton remained calm until a team member was able to render first aid. He had multiple shrapnel wounds to the left side of his body, but he refused morphine. Instead he remained mission-focused, calling out safe paths to troops coming to help those wounded in the blast. With the help of his brothers-in-arms, he and his British teammate were evacuated and received medical treatment, and both survived.

For Sergeant Horton's bravery and service in Afghanistan, he was awarded a Purple Heart and his fourth Bronze Star.



**MASTER SERGEANT**  
**BENJAMIN HORTON**

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Craftsman  
21<sup>st</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron  
Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado



Staff Sergeant

**KELSEY KENT**

Power Production Specialist  
353<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Group  
Kadena Air Base, Japan

On March 11, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake rocked Japan, triggering a 30-foot tsunami, killing thousands while devastating coastal villages and much of the Japanese countryside in the northeast. It was the largest earthquake ever recorded in Japan.

Staff Sergeant **KELSEY KENT**, a power production specialist from the 353<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Group, immediately went to work. Along with 19 others, he quickly deployed to Sendai Airport to support humanitarian relief efforts there and in the surrounding region of the Miyagi Prefecture.

Upon arriving at the airport, Sergeant Kent discovered that none of the airport's transformers worked as a result of the tsunami. The taxiways and runways were also critically damaged by flooding, so much so that the flood waters reached the second level of the passenger terminal. After assessing the damage, he went straight to work. Laboring for more than 36-hours straight, Sergeant Kent singlehandedly established diesel-run generator power, and soon the Air Force Special Tactics team was able to use Sendai Airport as a base for their humanitarian relief operations.

For three weeks, Sergeant Kent worked through countless powerful aftershocks and under the constant threat from unknown amounts of radiation emanating from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Eighteen to twenty hours workdays were the norm – all necessary to provide power to more than 250 U.S. military members and three separate command centers that brought humanitarian relief directly to the Japanese.

But just doing traditional power plant duties wasn't enough for Sergeant Kent. Garnering the nickname "Clark" for his Superman-like efforts, he marshaled pallet loaders, drove forklifts, loaded and unloaded tons of relief supplies, and refueled vehicles. His individual efforts helped bring more than 2.4 million pounds of equipment and relief supplies to Japan, in addition to the first fuel load to a local hospital in Sendai to operate its generators.

For Sergeant Kent's selfless determination and tireless work ethic, he was nominated for the Joint Service Achievement Medal.

While deployed to Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, Chaplain (Major) **RANDY SELLERS** frequently dealt with the less-visible scars of war – the grief, pain, and sorrow associated with the life-and-death struggle of armed conflict. This often meant providing pastoral care to the critically wounded. With compassionate courage, Chaplain Sellers ensured no Airmen or patients were alone even at the hour of their passing.

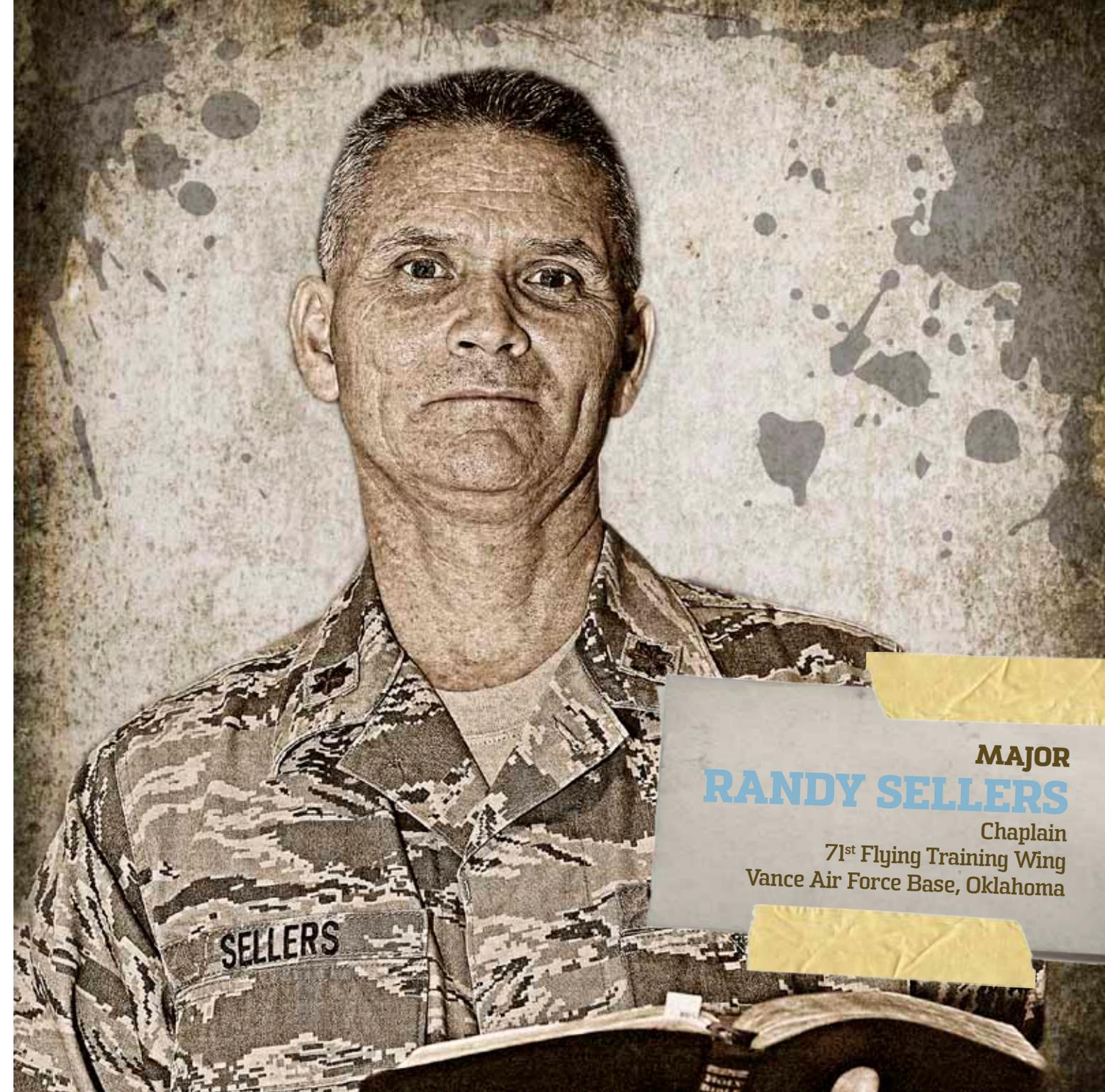
The greatest pastoral challenge Chaplain Sellers would face came suddenly on September 5, 2010. That day, he met an explosive ordnance disposal soldier who had been gravely wounded by a sniper's bullet. In spite of the emergency room team's diligent efforts, the soldier would not recover from his wounds. As the medical team ran out of options, Chaplain Sellers picked up the burden of service. He ensured this warrior and his service would be honored. He provided exceptional spiritual care consistent with the soldier's faith, and remained a steadfast source of comfort and hope.

But his work that day was only beginning.

Medical staff and approximately 90 fellow members of the soldier's unit began to participate in an informal prayer and concern vigil for the dying warrior. After 10 long hours of struggle, the soldier passed, but not without his faith confirmed. Chaplain Sellers bore witness to this as he administered last rites.

Immediately afterwards, Chaplain Sellers began his next mission: consoling and caring for more than 100 of this soldier's "band of brothers" and medical personnel who grieved the soldier's death. To accomplish this, Chaplain Sellers ardently worked with the medical staff to prepare the soldier for a field-expedient viewing by his deployed "family." He provided hope, delivering a strong message of encouragement, and he offered prayers for family, friends, and comrades.

Though this moment would pass, the chaplain's dedication to his fellow service members and their faith remains resolute. During his deployment, Chaplain Sellers spent more than 1,000 hours visiting 5,000 patients and staff, lifting morale and aiding the healing process. He truly demonstrated the highest level of compassionate courage, pastoral care, and wisdom. For his service while deployed, he was awarded his fourth Air Force Commendation Medal.



**MAJOR**  
**RANDY SELLERS**  
Chaplain  
71<sup>st</sup> Flying Training Wing  
Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma

# SACRIFICE

“

As I prepare for this last mission, I am a bit homesick...Mother and Dad, you are very close to me, and I long so to talk to you. America has asked much of our generation, but I'm glad to give her all I have because she has given me so much.”

**Sergeant Arnold Rahe**, U.S. Army Air Forces, WWII, Killed in Action over France, from a letter to his parents



**Staff Sergeant**

**MARK BADGER**

Explosive Ordnance Disposal  
466<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Squadron  
Operating Location-Bravo, Afghanistan

During Staff Sergeant **MARK BADGER**'s deployment to Afghanistan in 2010, he exemplified dedication to mission accomplishment by deftly eliminating more than 60 improvised explosive devices.

On October 5, Sergeant Badger and two fellow EOD technicians were providing counter-IED support to an Army cavalry company. The company's mission was to clear access routes, establish a strong point, and flush out insurgents in an extremely hostile environment surrounding Fish Mountain in southern Afghanistan.

Displaying exceptional courage, the EOD team helped disarm, analyze, and eliminate four victim-operated IEDs. Unfortunately, as the EOD Airmen and soldiers prepared to depart, an explosion occurred, overcoming Sergeant Badger's team members and soldiers nearby.

Despite being peppered by shrapnel, Sergeant Badger quickly responded without concern for his personal safety. First he aided a team member, treating the Airmen's grave wounds and directing the activities of an inexperienced medic.

After preparing his team member for evacuation, Sergeant Badger ran to tend to the movement's team leader, who had been blown more than 15 feet up the side of a mountain. Again Sergeant Badger directed the medic to properly care for the wounded Airman.

Incredibly, after disarming four IEDs and surviving an explosion, Sergeant Badger put his life on the line once more. He solely cleared suspected IED hazards, creating a safe path to move his teammates out of the area for evacuation. Only after ensuring the safety of others did he agree to be medically evacuated from the area.

Sergeant Badger's courageous actions and exemplary performance saved his team leader's life and helped provide a safer environment for Coalition Forces operating in Afghanistan.

For his bravery on October 5, Sergeant Badger was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with Valor. He was also awarded an additional Army Commendation Medal for exceptional performance during his six-month deployment.

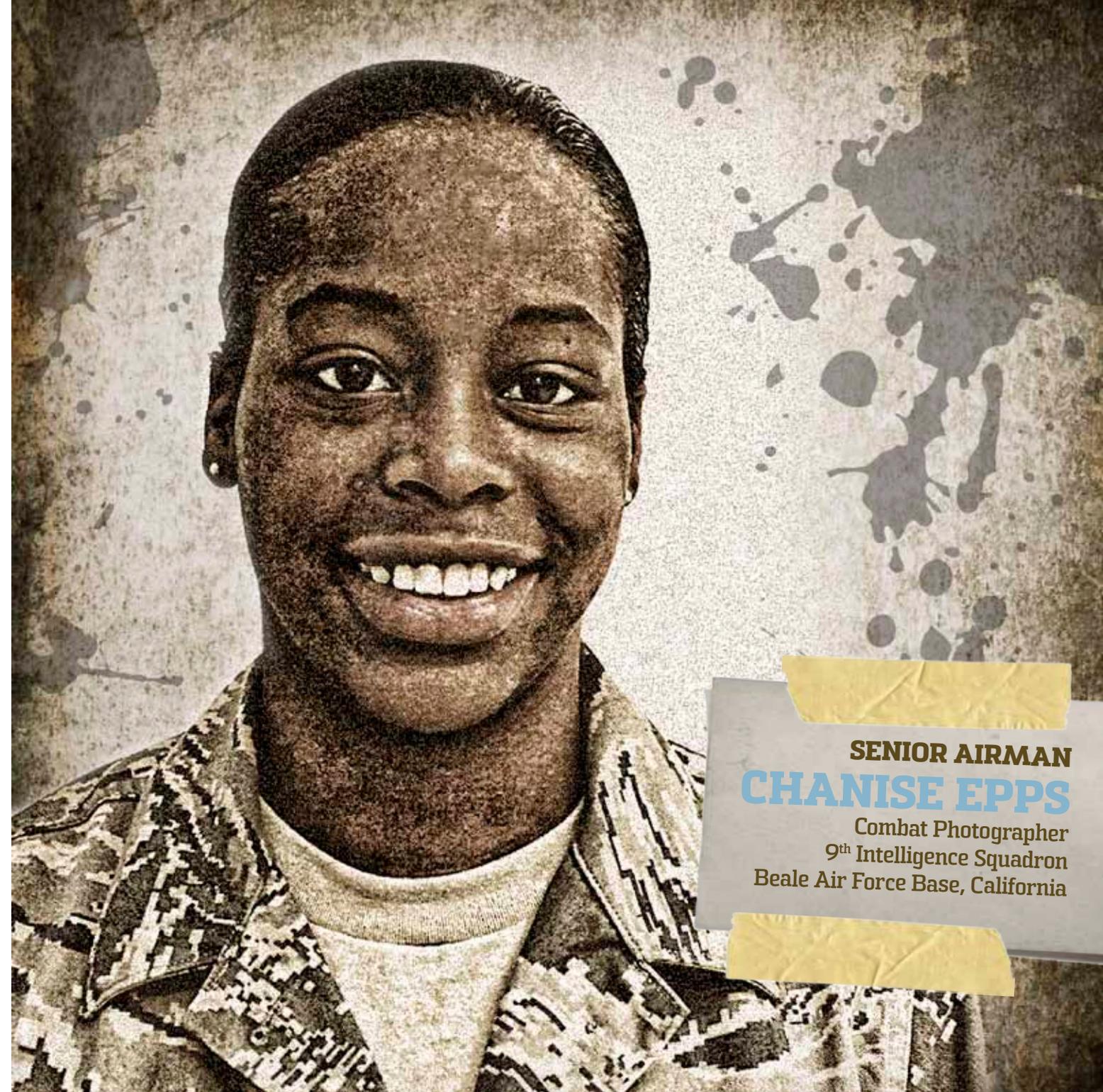
During her deployment with a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan in 2010, Senior Airman **CHANISE EPPS** proved that a simple hand-held camera can be just as effective in war as the high-tech U-2 imagery she normally worked with back home.

On December 28, 2010 while assigned to a small forward operating base, Airman Epps' FOB came under heavy mortar and small arms fire from insurgent forces. For three intense hours, she courageously performed combat camera documentation, capturing more than 600 images of base defense and firefighting efforts.

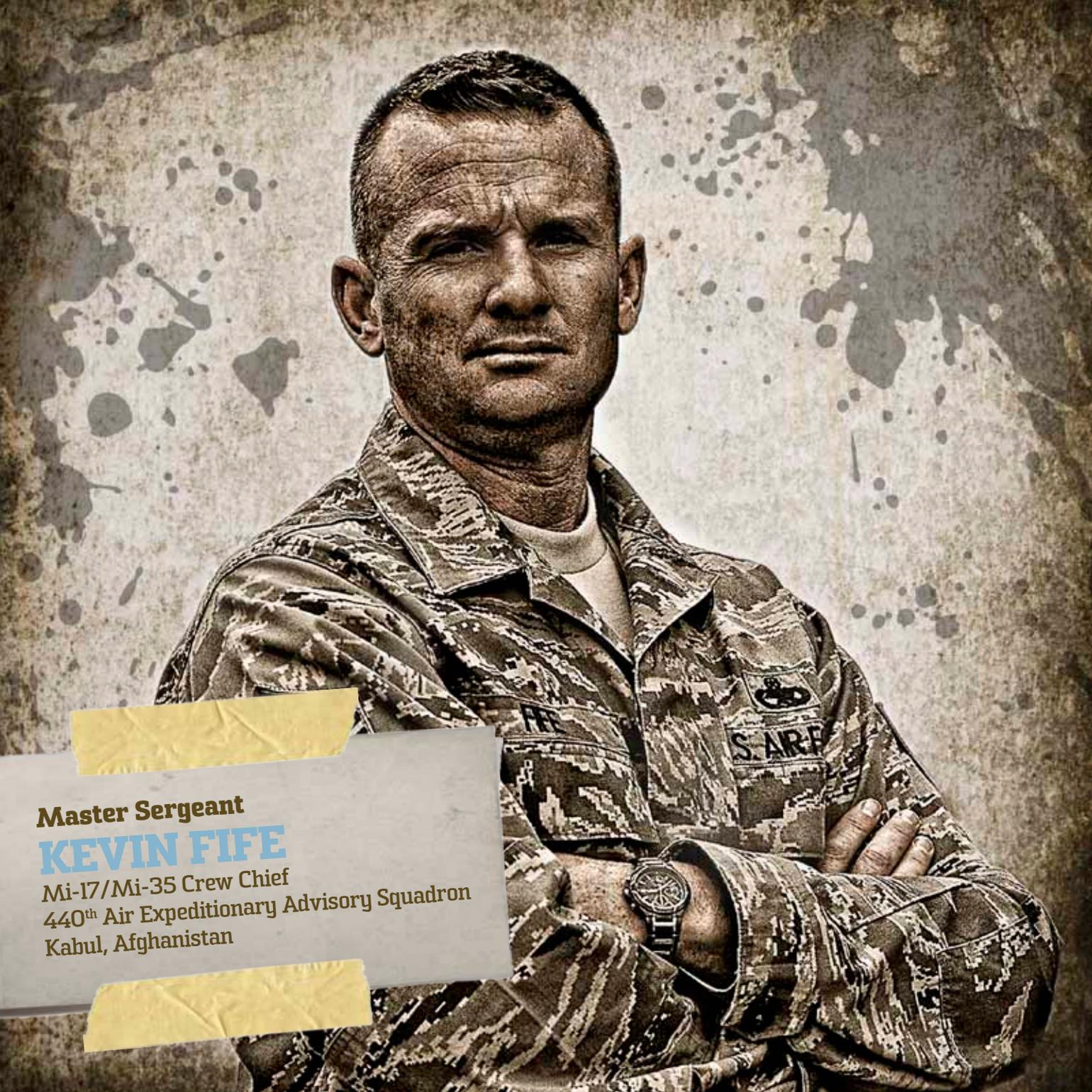
In the first two hours alone, several mortar rounds caused a massive fire on the FOB that destroyed the fuel storage depot, vehicle maintenance facility, and several fighting positions.

Airman Epps willingly put herself at risk, moving to a fighting position that had been abandoned due to heat and explosion hazard, all the while ensuring a better angle for intelligence collection. She quickly processed the imagery and provided it to FOB leadership. The images provided a crucial assessment of the damage and magnitude of destruction, enabling leadership to enhance the FOB's defenses in near-real time, including reinforcing garrison battle and counter-firing positions. Later her photographs were used as evidence to prosecute insurgents detained during the attack, and the images aided interrogations of the detainees in order to identify other violent extremists.

Airman Epps' actions were commendable. Armed with a camera as her primary weapon, her bravery and quick thinking were in keeping with the highest values of an Air Force combat photographer. For her actions, she was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, as well as the Army's Combat Action Badge.



**SENIOR AIRMAN**  
**CHANISE EPPS**  
Combat Photographer  
9<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron  
Beale Air Force Base, California



Master Sergeant

**KEVIN FIFE**

Mi-17/Mi-35 Crew Chief  
440<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron  
Kabul, Afghanistan

From November 2009 to November 2010, Master Sergeant **KEVIN FIFE** deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, in support of the 440<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron. Sergeant Fife served as the Rotary Wing Lead Crew Chief advisor to the Afghan Air Force Mi-17/ Mi-35 fleet. This was his third deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and, by his own accord, one of the most memorable experiences of his life.

Early in the morning on July 28, 2010, the Air Advisory Group was informed the Kabul River was flooding severely in the Jalalabad Valley. The rapidly rising waters trapped thousands of local Afghan people. Sergeant Fife was hand-picked by the Group Commander to be part of a relief mission on two Mi-17s, deemed Afghan Rescue Flight 705.

The helicopters quickly flew to the swollen river valley. Upon arrival, the two Mi-17 crews began picking up the local Afghan people that were stranded by the rising water. After multiple landings, Sergeant Fife risked his own life by reaching down and lifting up two Afghans stranded on a narrow embankment while the pilot expertly hovered the aircraft. At the end of the day, the team rescued more than 250 people.

The next morning Afghan Rescue Flight 705 responded to more calls for help and for a second day in a row, Sergeant Fife risked his life to save Afghans. This time, as he was assisting two children on board the helicopter they were swept down the river. He immediately jumped into the water and went after them.

His pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Willi said, “[If] he continued down the river, there was nothing I could do but watch. Once he was able to retrieve and secure the children, he picked them both up, tucked them under his arms and trudged through the rotor wash and rushing river back to the helicopter. The sight of him making his way back to the helicopter was something I’ll never forget.”

Sergeant Fife performed admirably. In two days Afghan Rescue Flight 705 saved over 2,100 Afghan people from the raging water of the Kabul River in both the Jalalabad and Kunar Valleys.

For his actions during his deployment and while supporting the Kabul River rescue mission, Sergeant Fife received the Bronze Star and was nominated for the Airman’s Medal.

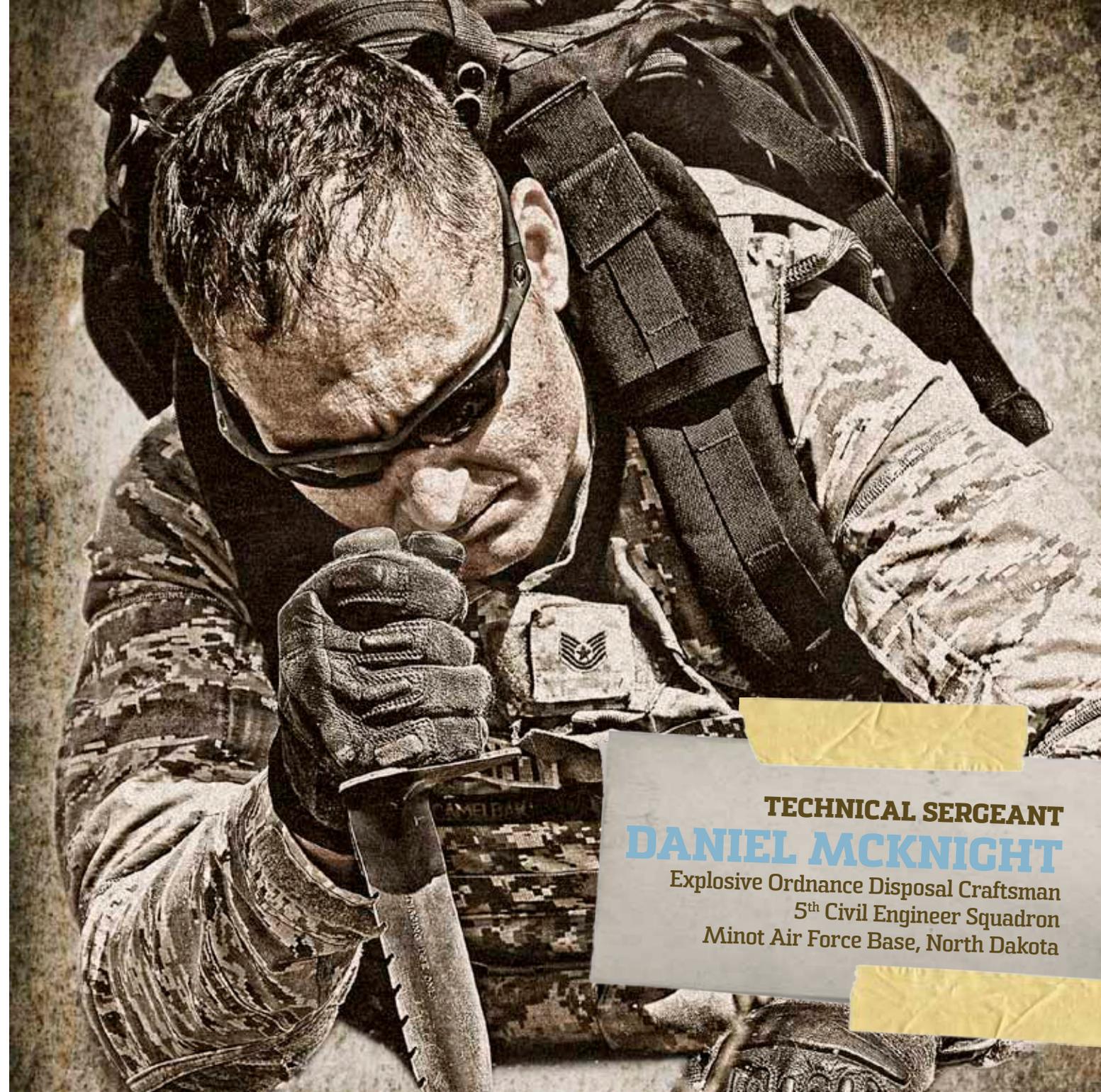
Technical Sergeant **DANIEL MCKNIGHT** hit the ground running during his deployment to Afghanistan in August 2009. He was among the first team of coalition forces to enter Now Zad, a city in the Helmand Province that had been under Taliban control since 2007.

During his first dismounted patrol, Sergeant McKnight and his team successfully cleared 10 improvised explosive devices without help from robotics. Using their ingenuity, his team devised several different ways to remotely disarm the IEDs, reducing the potential for casualties.

But it was a mission in October 2010 that Sergeant McKnight will always remember clearly. As he arrived on location to perform a battle damage assessment, the vehicle in front of his was struck hard by an IED. Soon after an all-out attack occurred. His team was assaulted by grenades and small arms fire. The U.S. Marines with whom he was working maneuvered to engage the threat, but their MK-19 grenade launcher and .50-caliber machine gun both failed.

Without hesitating, Sergeant McKnight directed his vehicle and gunner into the fight. Two rocket-propelled grenades passed within 20 meters of his vehicle and a third exploded just 10 meters away as they moved to engage the threat. Undeterred by the incoming rounds, he continued to stave off the insurgents until the Marine units were prepared to leave. With Sergeant McKnight's team providing cover, all Marines and Airmen were able to disengage without further incident.

Sergeant McKnight's efforts paid off. By the end of his deployment, he had safely destroyed 1,100 pounds of homemade explosives and cleared 18 IEDs. Most importantly, his actions saved countless lives while helping to return the city of Now Zad to coalition control for the first time in two-and-a-half years. For his dedicated service, Sergeant McKnight received his third Bronze Star Medal and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



**TECHNICAL SERGEANT**  
**DANIEL MCKNIGHT**  
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Craftsman  
5<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron  
Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota



**Technical Sergeant**  
**CLIFFORD MONROE**  
Structural Craftsman  
319<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron  
Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota

Technical Sergeant **CLIFFORD MONROE** deployed as part of Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul in Afghanistan from February to November 2010. Sergeant Monroe's team was the first permanent PRT presence in the Shahjoi District, which is the largest population center in the province and, at the time, the most hotly contested region between the Afghan government and insurgent forces.

On July 31, Sergeant Monroe was leaving a meeting with the Afghan district chief, Afghan security forces, and elders in Lali Kalay village when insurgents attacked his patrol with a remote-controlled improvised explosive device. Two Afghan National Police members were critically wounded in the blast and chaos ensued.

Unable to fight back from his vehicle, Sergeant Monroe selflessly dismounted to lead a team of International Security Assistance Force members and Afghan police to engage the enemy. Dodging rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47 rounds, Sergeant Monroe and his team marked the insurgents' position for attacking OH-58D helicopters, which then provided suppressive fire.

The team rapidly made its way to a nearby village that had been the source of the insurgent fire, but they discovered the insurgents had fled just as quickly as they had attacked. With a temporary calm prevailing, Sergeant Monroe and his team interviewed villagers and collected evidence for an investigation.

During his deployment, Sergeant Monroe would come under direct and indirect attack more than 35 times, yet he tirelessly continued to mentor local Afghan government and security officials, improving the connection between the population and the government while decreasing the amount of control insurgents had in the area.

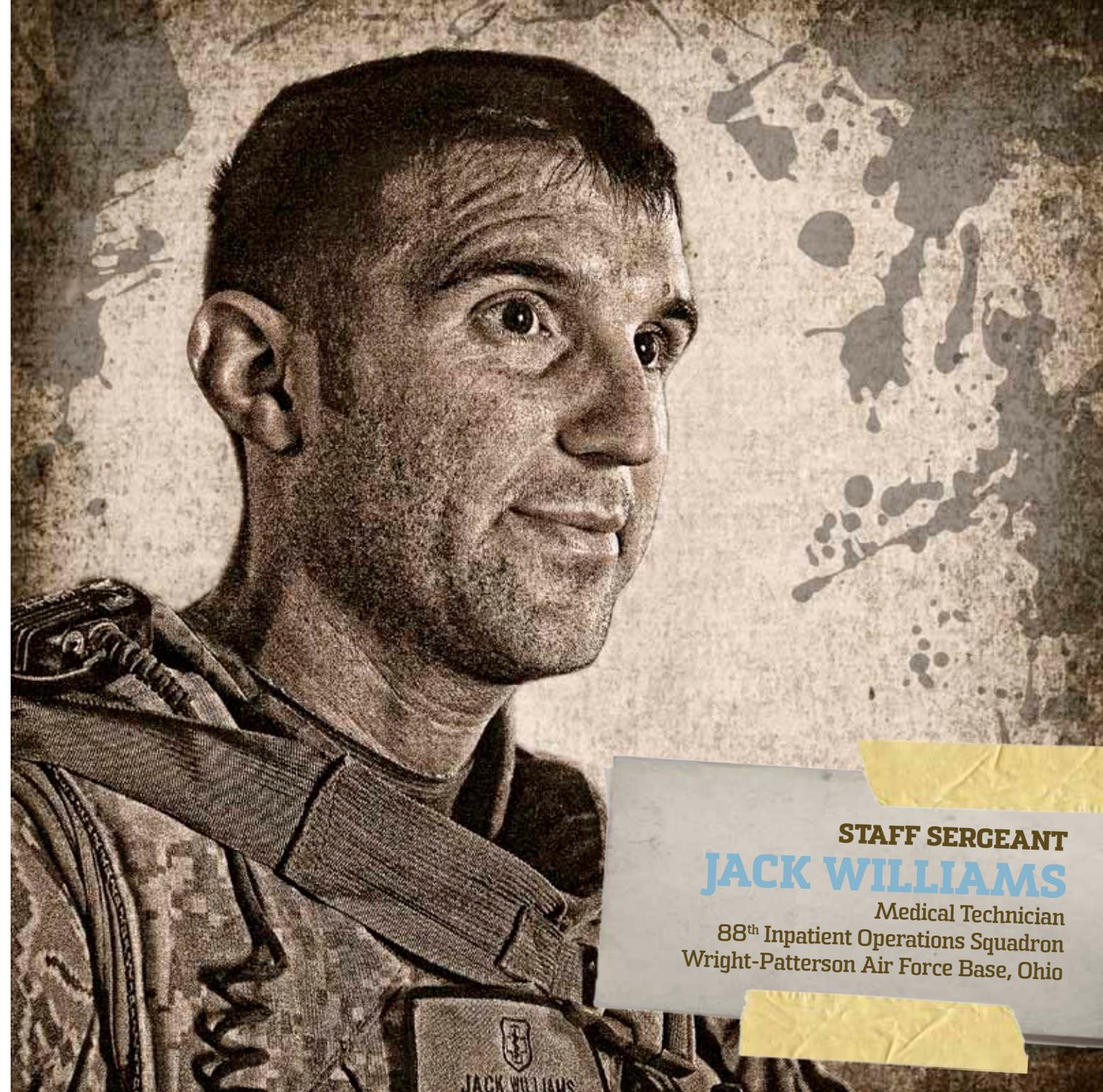
For his heroic actions throughout his deployment, Sergeant Monroe was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Army Combat Action Badge, and was nominated for the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

In February 2010, Staff Sergeant **JACK WILLIAMS** volunteered to deploy with a provincial reconstruction team in Zabul, Afghanistan. He was hand-selected to work as the medical lead for the District Support Team in Shahjoy, one of Zabul Province's largest and most highly contested areas.

From the start, Sergeant Williams' skills were put to the test. He had been at the forward operating base for less than two weeks when an Afghan National Army soldier arrived at the medical station with gunshot wounds to his head and shoulder. Sergeant Williams immediately controlled the bleeding. For his first time outside of training, he surgically opened an alternate airway to keep the soldier alive. His timely, skillful actions provided the medical team the precious time they needed to get the Afghan soldier ready to be moved. He then directed further medical treatment to save the soldier's life. The soldier was put in a hypothermic wrap and taken by helicopter to a facility that could provide more advanced care.

Later in his deployment Sergeant Williams was the lead medic during a mass-casualty bus accident. More than 50 people were injured in the accident, 10 of whom were critically hurt and were treated under his leadership.

Whether treating single patients wounded in combat or mass casualty scenarios, Sergeant Williams' medical skills helped save numerous coalition forces, Afghan soldiers, and Afghan citizens. For his distinguished service as both a combat medic and medical project manager, Sergeant Williams was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Air Force Combat Action Medal, and the Army Combat Medical Badge.



**STAFF SERGEANT**  
**JACK WILLIAMS**  
Medical Technician  
88<sup>th</sup> Inpatient Operations Squadron  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio



So Americans understand the costs of war. Yet as a country, we will never tolerate our security being threatened, nor stand idly by when our people have been killed. We will be relentless in defense of our citizens and our friends and allies. We will be true to the values that make us who we are."

**President Barack Obama**, from 'Remarks by the President on Osama Bin Laden'

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