



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
TO
STAFF SERGEANT CALEB W. ETHERIDGE

Staff Sergeant Caleb W. Etheridge distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as Pararescueman near Paktia Province, Afghanistan, from 2 March 2002 to 3 March 2002. On that date, Sergeant Etheridge launched on Gecko 12 from alert status at a forward location, his skill and sense of urgency were instrumental in getting the aircraft airborne in 15 minutes from a 30-minute alert posture. Due to the aircraft being at near maximum gross weight and using maximum power available, Sergeant Etheridge expertly pared down his equipment to only that which was absolutely necessary for the mission. During the 70 nautical mile, low level flight over enemy-held territory, he scanned for enemy activity and prepared the limited space in the aircraft cabin for loading as many personnel as possible. He requested an update on status of the wounded and directed the ground mission element to prepare the most severely injured for immediate loading. Once in the landing zone, Sergeant Etheridge exited the aircraft amidst enemy mortar, small arms, and rocket-propelled grenade fire, making multiple trips across the landing zone to retrieve the soldiers in distress. He rapidly assessed, loaded, and secured the injured and began to administer first aid to five wounded personnel. During the 45-minute flight to the surgical team, Sergeant Etheridge helped revive a soldier with a 90-degree fahrenheit core body temperature and multiple shrapnel wounds. His expert triage skills were invaluable in transferring the patients to the surgical team upon landing at the transload location in full blackout conditions. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Etheridge reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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