



U.S. Air Force Gen. Mike Hostage, commander of Air Combat Command, presents the Distinguished Flying Cross to U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lucas Ferrari, 48th Rescue Squadron, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., a geographically separated unit of the 23rd Wing, Moody Air Force Base, Ga., during half-time of the Army vs. Air Force football game at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo., on Nov. 5, 2011. Ferrari received the medal for his actions while deployed to Afghanistan, where his medical expertise ensured the survival of critically injured personnel during an urgent casualty evacuation mission.

“On June 9th 2010, two Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters, call sign “Pedro 66” and “Pedro 67” flew their mission to rescue a critically injured British Marine near Forward Operating Base Jackson in the Sangin District, Helmand Province, in southern Afghanistan. Upon arriving at the scene, both helicopters immediately came under enemy fire. “Pedro 67” landed to recover the wounded Marine, while “Pedro 66” remained in the air to provide supporting fires. While still airborne, “Pedro 66” was hit by enemy fire, critically damaging the tail rotor. Prior to the aircraft’s uncontrollable spin and subsequent crash, the pilot, Captain Wisniewski, was able to guide the aircraft away from the Landing Zone, friendly troops and civilian houses on the ground, avoiding further loss of life. Immediately, “Pedro 67” landed near the unsecured crash site where Pararescuemen Douglas Dicken, Mark Lillmars and Lucas Ferrari risked their lives moving to the crash site to extricate and treat their teammates. Of the seven on board “Pedro 66”, Capt Joel Gentz (CRO), TSgt Michael Flores (PJ), SrA Ben White (PJ), Capt David Wisniewski (Pilot) and SSgt David Smith (Flight Engineer) were killed. For their courage under fire and quick decision making, “Pedro 67” Pararescuemen SSgt Douglas Dicken was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor and SrA Lucas Ferrari was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.