



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE SILVER STAR
TO
STAFF SERGEANT WILLIAM J. CENNA

Staff Sergeant William J. Cenna distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan on 23 April 2011. On that date, Sergeant Cenna was part of a Guardian Angel rescue team tasked to recover two U.S. Army pilots downed in the Tagab Valley, an enemy controlled area east of Bagram. While on the hoist, Sergeant Cenna's Pedro 84 team took effective fire that damaged the aircraft and seriously injured one crewmember. The aircraft was forced to depart, which left Sergeant Cenna and his teammate on the ground to continue the mission. As Sergeant Cenna and his teammate traversed the rocky terrain to the crash site, they encountered effective fire from multiple enemy positions from the south and west. Reaching the crash site, Sergeant Cenna assessed the patient while his teammate conducted a search and recover sensitive items. The sun had just come up, and with the Pedro 84 gone, the insurgents voiced their intent to take individuals hostage from the crash site. Sergeant Cenna then began taking effective fire at his position next to the aircraft. As he took cover, he began to call out threats to his team leader who was coordinating with aircraft above for engagement. They talked AH-64s on to targets in the high ground and calculated reverse azimuths to identify enemy positions in the valley. One incoming round ignited fuel at the wreckage and instantly the crash site erupted in flames. Sergeant Cenna and his teammate pushed through enemy fire to an alternate hide site and continued to pass enemy locations throughout the valley. Approximately two hours into the firefight, a 16-man infantry quick reaction team was airlifted to a blocking position between the Guardian Angel team and the enemy force, and immediately took casualties. Sergeant Cenna showed great courage and heroism over the 6-hour mission. Risking his life on multiple occasions, his actions directly resulted in numerous insurgents killed in action and more importantly, enabled the recovery of the downed American pilot and killed in action infantryman, and another critically injured soldier from enemy territory. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Cenna has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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