



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE SILVER STAR
TO
STAFF SERGEANT RYAN P. HIGGINS

Staff Sergeant Ryan P. Higgins distinguished himself by gallantry while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States as a Pararescueman, Qara Ghoyli Village, Almar District, Faryab Province, Afghanistan 21 August 2019. On this date, Sergeant Higgins was part of Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha 7134 conducting a thirty-hour mission to degrade a Taliban network's offensive capabilities, command and control, and to repel distribution of weapons in the province. On that morning, Taliban fighters initiated an ambush on friendly forces that critically wounded an Afghan Soldier leaving him immobile in the kill zone. Sergeant Higgins, without regard for his own life, moved in the direction of hostile fire exposing himself to heavy machine gun and grenade attacks as he attempted to retrieve the wounded Soldier. Next, realizing that his element had lost fire superiority, Sergeant Higgins, again without regard for his own safety, repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire and moved to various defensive fighting positions while treating multiple Afghan Soldiers with shrapnel wounds. Additionally, as multiple air strikes were ineffective in eliminating enemy fighters, Sergeant Higgins bravely exposed himself to obscure the enemy with smoke grenades that was followed by friendly force engagement with M320 grenade launchers, ultimately killing fourteen enemy fighters. Sergeant Higgins' bold maneuver allowed his team to regain ground and suppression of Taliban fighters long enough for him to recover the wounded Afghan Soldier. After reconsolidation, Sergeant Higgins and his team began clearance of an enemy compound and were met with resistance from a Taliban counter ambush originating from heavy barricaded machine gun positions that seriously injured three Army Special Forces Soldiers. As effective PKM fire ensued, the three Soldiers remained pinned down and unable to move, Sergeant Higgins, again without regard for his own life, exposed himself to provide fire suppression, maneuvered under fire to the wounded, administered life-saving medical care, coordinated an emergency medical evacuation, and directed casualty movement to the landing zone through an explosive breached wall. In flight, he continued aggressive medical treatment before transferring care to Maimanah hospital where two of the Soldiers ultimately succumbed to their wounds. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Higgins reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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