

Pararescueman awarded Silver Star



PJ Staff Sergeant Zachary Kline was awarded the Silver Star for bravery during a combat rescue in Afghanistan in 2011. Fantastic job, SSgt. Kline... living by the motto.

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base- Maj. Gen. Frank Padilla awarded Staff Sgt. Zachary Kline the Silver Star in a ceremony here July 14, citing Kline's role in rescuing two U.S. Army pilots while under fire, defending a crash site and coordinating aerial counter-attacks. Kline, a pararescueman, is assigned to the 306th Rescue Squadron at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

"The Silver Star is way up on the continuum of honor," said Padilla, the deputy inspector general of the Air Force. "That means you voluntarily risked your life to save others, voluntarily risked your life to expose yourself to great danger in the service of your country. And that is exactly what Zach Kline did that day."

Kline endured approximately six hours under enemy fire, while in the process of recovering two U.S. military members.

"It's an honor being recognized for just doing my job," Kline said. "I worked with some awesome guys and was nice being a part of it."

According to the award citation, Kline was a part of a rescue team tasked to recover two U.S. Army pilots from an OH-58D Kiowa that had gone down. While on the ground, Kline fought enemy fire while coordinating with aircraft by radio to target threats located behind his position.

During the engagement, an incoming round ignited fuel within the wreckage, which then erupted in flames. He continued to push through enemy fire to an alternate site while still guiding overhead aircraft to adversarial positions by radio.