



Overland Park, KS
The Silver Star

"We were caught in a very deadly crossfire. We took a lot more casualties during this phase of the movement." Simson said. "I was taking care of casualties as best I could during the march out without becoming one myself."

Throughout the ordeal, Simson said he repeated a sequence of tasks over and over. "See or hear somebody need help, put out suppressive fire, move the man to cover if possible, and render lifesaving aid."

Eventually the unit got to a clearing where it was safe to evacuate the injured.

"I was just trying to help out," Simson recalled. "We were all a little exhausted by the end of the day."

Simson was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on the battlefield; his willingness to expose himself repeatedly to potential injury or death coupled with his composure under fire was exemplary and inspiring to his fellow servicemen and the Afghan soldiers.

"There are many, many other sailors out there who perform incredible acts but fail to get properly recognized," he said of the medal. "It feels weird to have the attention for just trying to do the job that was required of me. The men with me that day displayed great courage and determination in the face of withering fire. This is what gave me the strength to do my job...my buddies who were right there with me."

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Joshua Simson

In 2007, Navy HM2 Joshua Simson was embedded with a joint U.S. military and Afghan National Army patrol to conduct key leader engagements in the village of Saret Kholet. Simson was serving as an advisor on how to be a medical first responder.

On July 27, Simson demonstrated what committed first responders do when he repeatedly placed himself in the line of fire from machine guns, AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades to single-handedly provide aid to more than a dozen wounded U.S. and Afghan National Army soldiers during an attack.

"After talking with the elders, we pushed further east to establish an observation post to watch a certain river crossing. A squad of Afghan National Army had pushed across the river to clear two houses and spotted bad guys," Simson explained. "The Afghans fired at them, causing the Anti-Afghan Forces to initiate their ambush prematurely."

"We were in the kill zone, but since we hadn't pushed as far down the road as we had intended, we weren't entirely surrounded," said Simson, who joined the Navy in September 2005 out of a sense of obligation and 'to pay back a small part of the debt towards the cost of freedom.'

"I knew about the heritage of corpsmen before I joined, and the job appealed to me...taking care of my brothers on the battlefield," Simson stated.

The ambush led to a seven-and-a-half hour battle. At one point, Simson pulled a wounded soldier into a nearby bunker to provide cover. Immediately after entering the bunker, it suffered a direct hit. Dazed, but undeterred, Simson finished treating the Afghan soldier.

