



Oregon City, OR
Silver Star Medal

Captain Kent G. Solheim

Captain Kent Solheim, United States Army, was awarded the Silver Star for actions during a raid in Karbala, Iraq where he courageously saved multiple American lives by disregarding his personal safety.

On July 27, 2007, Captain Kent Solheim, United States Army, participated in Operation VOLCANO II, an operation designed to capture a senior leader of the infamous Shiite militia, the Mahdi Army in the city of Karbala, Iraq.

Solheim's team "fast roped" from helicopters into the area, and set up their position near the target building. Insurgents viciously attacked the American forces from three sides with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and AK-47s. As the enemy fire got heavier, combat air support was called in to eliminate some of the aggressors, but a significant number of attackers remained to the north of Solheim and his unit. These insurgents used the dust that the assault force's helicopters had kicked up to conceal their movements.

With the insurgents targeting one of the American positions, Solheim aggressively maneuvered his men to reinforce the beleaguered soldiers. It was then that he noticed an insurgent armed with an RPG, less than ten meters away from his position. Disregarding any concern for himself, he bravely charged forward, shot and killed the insurgent, saving the Americans in the nick of time. Realizing that the US forces in the building were in grave danger, Solheim exposed himself to enemy fire in order to gain a better position to cover the other soldiers in his unit. From this location, he managed to limit the insurgent fire on his team. In the final moments of the engagement he rounded a corner and he found himself face to face with an AK-47-wielding Mahdi fighter. Solheim made a split second decision, firing at and killing the insurgent. However, as the terrorist fell to the ground fatally wounded, he let loose one last burst from his AK-47, which wounded Solheim in the legs and back.

Thanks to Captain Solheim's selfless and heroic actions, dozens of American lives were saved. His actions demonstrated how he placed the lives of his men over that of his own, earning him the Silver Star.

