



Rowland, NC
Silver Star

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RONALD G. STRICKLAND

On May 30, 2007, SFC Ronald Strickland demonstrated exceptional courage in the face of more than fifty enemy fighters, a force nearly ten times the size of his element. He remained cool and calm throughout the nightlong engagement that followed, encountering the enemy at close range yet completing an unanticipated recovery mission.

Strickland was assigned to D Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team.

It was early evening on the 30th when his platoon, part of Task Force 1Fury, was in the process of establishing a blocking position in the southern portion of the battalion's area of operation in the vicinity of Kajaki Sofla, Helmand, Afghanistan. They witnessed a CH-47 Chinook helicopter being shot down by enemy fire after it had just dropped off its load of paratroopers on the opposite side of the river. Without hesitation, Strickland started moving his platoon towards the crash site to prevent the Taliban from capturing his fellow soldiers.

Strickland received intel from a aerial forward observer that friendly reinforcements were en route but had to escape an ambush first. Knowing this, he and his soldiers were able to hold off at least 30 enemy fighters attempting to get to the crash site. When the friendly reinforcements finally reached the scene, Strickland fought his way back to the trucks to establish a better defensive posture around the crash area and then shifted his efforts toward the recovery of the seven coalition soldiers in the wreckage.

Demonstrating great leadership throughout the entire task, Strickland was able to calm the paratroopers who were providing security by showing exceptional bravery as two AC-130 gunships eliminated over 30 more enemy fighters within 100 meters of the crash site.

He also took on most of the recovery efforts in order to prevent his men from seeing their fellow soldiers fallen. Strickland was able to recover all seven of the coalition soldiers from the debris and move their remains safely back to a helicopter extraction point.

For his outstanding commitment to his fellow soldiers during the entire mission, Strickland was awarded the Silver Star Medal by President George W. Bush during an 82nd Airborne Division Review on May 22, 2008 at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

When he arrived at the site, he dismounted his truck and grabbed six of his paratroopers. They quickly set up a security posture, and within three minutes the first of the enemies arrived at the location. The team engaged, but they were clearly outnumbered.

