

TECHNICAL SERGEANT SCOTT WOODRING

U.S. military units in Tikrit, Iraq aren't strangers to engaging the enemy in open fields, but they use the fields' tall grass as cover whenever possible. Air Force Technical Sergeant Scott Woodring had no choice but to abandon his cover on April 25, 2008 when his unit was under attack by six insurgents and he needed to reassess whether they should bring in air support.

As a Joint Terminal Attack Controller for the Air Force, Woodring was embedded with an U.S. Army ground unit. It was his job to strategize with the Ground Commander about how to use the Air Force helicopter assets overhead.

Between firing at the approaching enemy, Woodring and his Ground Commander weighed the risks of using their air assets. But when a Soldier in their platoon was shot, Woodring knew they needed to reassess the situation.

When Woodring reached up from his cover of grass to pull down his Commander so they could talk, he was immediately shot in the left forearm.

"My buddies now joke with me, saying 'be careful when you're grabbing your Ground Commander,'" said Woodring.

With the enemy strengthening their presence and U.S. helicopters waiting overhead to engage at the ground unit's command, Woodring had no choice but to continue his mission and maneuver the armed helicopters.

During the next 15 minutes, while a Soldier bandaged his arm, Woodring coordinated the close air support from the attack helicopters, which ultimately eliminated the six insurgents.

Through outstanding combat leadership and sound judgment, Woodring ensured the safety of his team, prevented further casualties and guaranteed the successful completion of their mission.

Woodring and the other wounded Soldier were safely removed from the fight and flown to Balad, Iraq. Before he knew it, Woodring was en route to Andrews Air Force base to be treated for his injuries and reunited with his family.

For his heroic actions and unselfish dedication to duty, the U.S. Air Force awarded Woodring with a Bronze Star Medal, with a Second Oak Leaf Cluster, with Valor.

The pinnacle of accomplishment came in November 2009 when he received the prestigious Sijan Award.



U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Scott Woodring earned a Bronze Star with "Valor" while serving in Iraq during a 2008 deployment.

The Sijan Award annually recognizes Airmen who demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities in honor of the late Captain Lance P. Sijan. Capt. Sijan's mother and sister were in attendance at the award ceremony held at the Pentagon, and presented Woodring, among three other Airmen, with the award.

"Having Capt. Sijan's family there really made everything come together," reflected Woodring. "It was a very special moment for me."

Woodring's own wife and family have been an important part of his career as well. "Without the family a lot of this doesn't happen for us," Sergeant Woodring explained. He noted support from his family "reaches pretty deep."

Born in Tulane, Ohio, Woodring enlisted in the Air Force in 1997 directly after high school. His combat leadership and action in support of special operations task forces has directly contributed to measurable success in both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. After serving overseas in 12 four-month deployments to date, Woodring is now based in Georgia.

"I hope to follow in the footsteps of some of my Air Force role models and I look forward to a long career in the military," said Woodring.