

Enlisted Hero Walk Lackland AFB



Master Sergeant Ivan M. Ruiz



Air Force Cross

Afghanistan

The President of the United States of America, authorized by section 8742 of title 10 U.S.C, awards the Air Force Cross to Master Sergeant Ivan M. Ruiz for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an armed enemy of the United States as a Pararescue Craftsman, 22d Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron, Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component-Afghanistan, in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, on 10 December 2013. On that date, Sergeant Ruiz attached to a team of Army Special Forces personnel and Afghan Commandos conducting a raid in denied terrain. After a point blank engagement with four insurgents, Sergeant Ruiz's team continued to clear a small compound of resistance while maneuvering towards neutralized insurgents to search their remains. Isolated from the 14 man element, Sergeant Ruiz and two teammates encountered a vicious insurgent crossfire, sweeping the courtyard with small arms fire and throwing hand grenades from barricaded strongpoints. Sergeant Ruiz eliminated one enemy fighter with well-aimed carbine fire, while enemy fire wounded his two comrades, rendering them immobile and exposed to enemy fire. Alone in the courtyard, Sergeant Ruiz completely disregarded his personal safety and refused to withdraw to cover. Single-handedly suppressing enemy fire until reinforcements arrived, Sergeant Ruiz pressed ahead under intense fire to reach his wounded comrades. Drawing fire from the enemy and returning fire to prevent the insurgents from maneuvering, he was gradually driven into a

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prone fighting position by the sheer volume of enemy fire. His refusal to leave the courtyard prevented enemy fighters from engaging his wounded teammates with direct fire weapons, though enemy grenade impacted within five meters of Sergeant Ruiz' position. Eventually joined by teammates, Sergeant Ruiz advanced through a hail of machine gun fire and grenades to drag a wounded teammate back to a position of relative cover and concealment. While still dangerously exposed to gunfire raking the compound, Sergeant Ruiz administered life-saving trauma care to his teammates while wearing night vision goggles. Sergeant Ruiz's heroic actions through intense enemy fire saved the lives of two teammates and contributed to 11 insurgents killed. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Sergeant Ruiz reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.