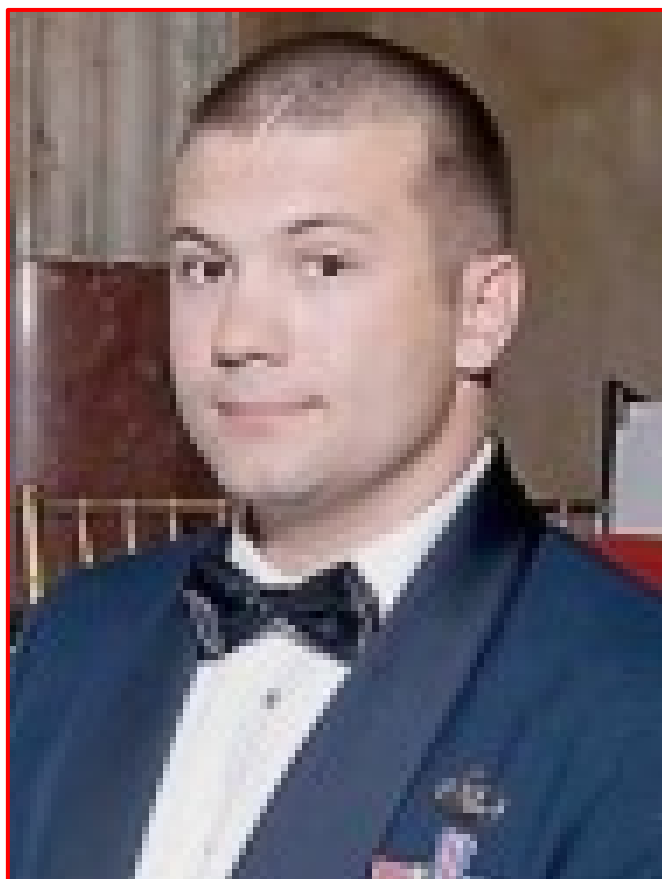


Enlisted Hero Walk Lackland AFB



Technical Sergeant Stephen Achey



Silver Star

Afghanistan

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star Medal to Stephen Achey, Technical Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action with military operations against an armed enemy of the United States at the Shahi Hot Valley, Afghanistan, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, on 2 March 2002. On that date, while performing the duties of Enlisted Terminal Attack Controller, 20th Air Support Operations Squadron, 18th Air Support

Operations Group, Air Combat Center, Combined Forces Land Component Commander, Company C, 1-87 Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, for Operation ANACONDA, Airman Achey assaulted into heavily defended territory and immediately began taking heavy fire. Hit and thrown, but undeterred by the effects of a mortar round exploding within a few feet of him, Airman Achey returned fire and called for close air support. Unable to contact any aircraft and with his radio now destroyed, Airman Achey braved the intense enemy fire to link up with another controller. Airman Achey contacted a reconnaissance aircraft and relayed his unit's situation to the orbiting command and control aircraft. Airman Achey and the other controller took cover and began deriving coordinates to attack the enemy. Realizing a necessary piece of

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equipment was left in the line of fire and with complete disregard for his personal safety, Airman Achey boldly ran out to retrieve the equipment. Under a hail of machine gun fire, he gathered the equipment and made it back to cover. The subsequent air strikes suppressed the enemy, allowing the unit to reposition to better ground. Now receiving sniper fire, Airman Achey quickly called a break maneuver, avoiding damage and possible loss of the aircraft and crew. Alternating between radio and his rifle, Airman Achey shored up a hole in the defenses and provided covering fire for the removal of the wounded. During the action, Airman Achey shot and killed three enemy soldiers. Throughout the battle, Airman Achey repeatedly placed himself at risk to assist the wounded. As night fell, Airman Achey orchestrated a gunship and fighter attack that destroyed numerous enemy positions and facilitated the extraction of the wounded. His courageous and aggressive acts against a determined enemy vowing to fight to the death directly affected the outcome of the battle. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Airman Achey has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.