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Retired 10th Mountain Division Soldier awarded Silver Star for courage, sacrifice under fire

FORT DRUM, N.Y.  – For his decisive leadership and actions in Afghanistan, a former 10th Mountain Division (LI) Soldier received the Silver Star during a ceremony Sept. 1 at Fort Drum.

Sgt. Adam Holroyd repeatedly put himself in harm’s way to ensure the safety of other Soldiers during a coordinated enemy attack in the Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, while assigned to 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), in August 2009.

The retired sniper team leader said that he could not take full credit for the award because it also belongs to a long list of people who helped develop him as a person capable of valor.

“It is to them that we owe our gratitude, not really to me,” Holroyd said. “Many of those people are here today, and for that I am so very thankful. Thankful that we still live. This award is and has always been larger than just me. It is a marker in time for the valorous actions executed faithfully by members of the Chosin battalion during the global war on terrorism.”

Lt. Col. Scott Horrigan, former 1-32 Infantry commander, spoke during the ceremony about the deployment and the Soldiers of Task Force Chosin.

“In the early summer of 2009, no one in the Chosin battalion realized that they would be asked to air assault into a district center in northern Nuristan, called Barg-e Matal,” Horrigan said. “They did not realize over the months forthcoming that they would be asked to fight in cornrows right outside the district center, they did not know they would be asked to fight inside the wood huts of the district center and they did not know they would be asked to extend that fight into the mountains outside. To describe that terrain as anything less than extreme would be an understatement.”

According to official records, Anti-Afghan Forces (AAF) initiated an attack on the battalion headquarters with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades on Aug. 10, 2009. Holroyd rushed through enemy fields of fire to evacuate a wounded Joint Task Force medic, and then he provided guidance to those around him to fend off the enemy attack.

As the situation intensified, an ammunition supply point caught fire. Holroyd again repeatedly moved through enemy fire to retrieve water to help extinguish the fire. At the same time, he warned others not to assist him, knowing the likelihood of their injury or death was high.

Holroyd then grabbed an M2 machine gun to suppress enemy positions and draw their attention away from the ASP. He personally led the process of extracting the cases with armed RPG rounds out of the ASP, which allowed more Soldiers to move back to the compound to provide support. As a result, the battalion headquarters element retained its position and maintained the safety of coalition Soldiers.

Horrigan said that the Chosin Soldiers are a family, and that their actions reflect that relationship.

“Sgt. Holroyd helped teach me this lesson and helped fuse that as part of my professional DNA,” he said. “Sgt. Holroyd embodies everything that is great about the 10th Mountain Division. He’s a tough Soldier, a great leader, and he is someone who will absolutely do what is right whenever he is asked.”

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