"Above the Best"

SFC Shughart and MSG Gordon

Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1995 Induction

Master Sergeant Gary Ivan Gordon served as a Sniper Team leader in Task Force Ranger of the United States Special Operations Command in Mogadishu, Somalia during Operation RESTORE HOPE. On 3 October 1993, Master Sergeant Gordon's Sniper Team functioned as a "Blue Team" in a traditional Air Cavalry assault operation. They provided precision fires from the lead helicopter during an assault, and at two crash sites, while being subjected to intense automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenade fires.

When MSG Gordon learned that ground forces were not immediately available to secure the second crash site, he and another sniper unhesitatingly volunteered to be inserted to protect the four critically wounded personnel, despite being well aware of the growing number of enemy personnel closing in on the site. After his third request to be inserted, MSG Gordon received permission to perform his volunteer mission.

When debris and enemy ground fires at the site caused them to abort the first attempt, MSG Gordon was inserted one hundred meters south of the crash site. Equipped with only his sniper rifle and a pistol, MSG Gordon and his fellow sniper, while under intense small arms fire from the enemy, fought their way through a dense maze of shanties and shacks to reach the critically injured crew members.

MSG Gordon immediately pulled the pilot and the other crew members from the aircraft and established a perimeter which placed him and his fellow sniper in the most vulnerable position. MSG Gordon used his long range rifle and side arm to kill an undetermined number of attackers until he depleted his ammunition.

MSG Gordon then went back to the wreckage, recovering some of the crew's weapons and ammunition. Despite the fact that he was critically low on ammunition he provided some of it to the dazed pilot and then radioed for help. MSG Gordon continued to travel the perimeter, protecting the downed crew.

After his team member was fatally wounded, and his own rifle ammunition exhausted, MSG Gordon returned to the wreckage, recovering a rifle with the last five rounds of ammunition and gave it to the pilot with the words, "Good Luck." Then, armed only with his pistol, MSG Gordon continued to fight until he was fatally wounded.

His actions saved the pilot's life. MSG Gordon was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for this action.

"On the wall of the Special Forces Memorial Court at Ft. Bragg, the words of the prophet Isaiah are etched in stone: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?'"
President William J. Clinton, May 23, 1994 The East Room 11:07 A.M. EDT