

# Special Forces Soldiers' actions honored with Bronze Stars

By Susan Huseman  
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Three 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group Soldiers were presented with Bronze Star medals during a ceremony held at Panzer Hall in Böblingen, Germany, on Feb. 4.

Sgt. 1st Class Justin J. Aflague, Staff Sgt. Jarred E. Shewey and Staff Sgt. Ryan M. Stovall, all assigned to 1/10 Special Forces Group Operational Detachment Alpha, were awarded the Bronze Star medal with "V" device for their heroic actions while supporting an International Security Assistance Forces mission in Afghanistan on July 29, 2009. Sgt. 1st Class Sean Laske, an intelligence sergeant, also earned the Bronze Star, but was unable to attend the ceremony.

The Soldiers were on a dismounted patrol in the northern Uzbin Valley when their small team of Soldiers, marines and Afghanistan National Army soldiers came in contact with 15 insurgents.

In the ensuing firefight, Chief Warrant Officer Douglas Vose, their patrol leader, was mortally wounded. The Soldiers were cited for enabling their patrol to suppress the insurgent attack and for allowing for the medical treatment of Vose.

"We just did what we were trained to do," said Aflague, a communications sergeant from Sinajana, Guam, who reached Vose first and provided first aid.

"We tried to make the best out of the situation we were handed," he said. "Unfortunately, we took a big hit with Doug. It was like losing a family member."

While Aflague rendered aid to Vose, Stovall, a senior medical sergeant from Troy, Mont., who was wounded in the left leg early in the enemy assault, engaged the insurgents with his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, took charge of four ANA soldiers and

eliminated the enemy's position with a fragmentation grenade. He then provided medical care to Vose until the medevac arrived.

"What I did was based on the training I've received — some of the best training in the world. I feel lucky to be here and still

be able to walk," said Stovall, who was struck by enemy fire a second time on Sept. 5, 2009, while on a special reconnaissance mission in Kabul Province, Afghanistan.

Stovall received two Purple Hearts for his wounds and an Army Commendation Medal for his actions in the Sept. 5 engagement.

Shewey, the point man on the patrol who engaged the enemy with M4 fire and M203 rounds, is credited with single-handedly providing the security needed to allow Aflague to begin treating Vose.

Cited for poise under intense fire, Shewey said the key was staying focused. "You can only worry about one thing at a time," said the senior weapons sergeant from Chieffland, Fla.

Capt. Anthony Heisler, Sgt. 1st Class Nick Atkins and Staff Sgt.

Jacob Lindholm were also awarded Purple Hearts for injuries sustained when their Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle struck an improvised explosive device Oct. 6, 2009, in Wardak Province, Afghanistan.



Photo by Susan Huseman

Air Force Maj. Gen. Frank J. Kisner, Special Operations Command Europe commander, right, shakes the hand of Staff Sgt. Jarred E. Shewey during a 1/10th Special Forces Group valor ceremony Feb. 4.

