

2020

JOHN K. SINGLAUB/JEDBURGH AWARD
MASTER SERGEANT GREGORY KELLER

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Master Sergeant Gregory Keller was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He graduated from high school in 2001 from Trade College with an associate degree in carpentry in 2003 and from college with a bachelor's degree in business management in 2012. MSG Keller enlisted in the Army in May of 2003 as an 18X Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). He graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course in May of 2005 as an 18B, Weapons Sergeant.

After completion of the SFQC, MSG Keller was assigned to 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and moved to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Upon arrival to 5th SFG (A) he immediately deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III (OIF III) from June 2005 - January 2006. He was assigned to Special Forces Operational Detachment (SFOD-A) 566/5236. Immediately upon returning from his deployment, SFC Keller volunteered and successfully completed Ranger school. Following Ranger school, MSG Keller deployed from August 2006 - March 2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom IV.

In January 2011, after a break in service, MSG Keller joined C/2-19th SFG(A), West Virginia National Guard out of Camp Dawson and was assigned to SFOD-A 9236, where he served as the Weapons Sergeant. MSG Keller also attended college during that time, obtaining his bachelor's degree in Business Management from Elizabethtown College in May of 2012. In June of 2012, MSG Keller returned to active duty and was assigned to United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) and served as an instructor at the 18B Weapons Committee for the MOS Phase of the SFQC.

Upon signing in to 10th SFG(A) in August of 2014 MSG Keller was assigned to the AFRICOM Crisis Response Force (CRF) C/2-10th SFG (A), where he served as the Senior Weapons Sergeant on SFOD-A 0236. From September 2014 to March 2015 he participated in the AFRICOM CRF Up-Cell rotation that was positioned in Baumholder, Germany. After completion of the rotation in Germany, MSG Keller was assigned to SFOD-A 0231 to be a cell leader on a new assault SFOD-A and to assist with the transition from the AFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) to the CENTCOM AOR. In May of 2016, MSG Keller deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) where C/2-10th SFG(A) was postured as the Geographic Combatant Commander's Response Force for the CENTCOM AOR. During that deployment MSG Keller was a lead instructor during the creation of a new counter terrorist unit. Post deployment, MSG Keller served as the Group S-3 Assistant Operations NCO. In May of 2017, MSG Keller was assigned to D/2-10th SFG(A) as the Operations Sergeant for SFOD-A 0241 where he is currently serving. MSG Keller immediately integrated into the Pre-Mission Training and deployed in support of Resolute Support Mission VIII from September 2017- April 2018.

MSG Keller's awards and decorations include: two Silver Stars, two Bronze Star Medals, two Purple Hearts, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, 2 Army Commendation Medals, Navy Commendation Medal, three Army Achievement Medals, Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, Jumpmaster, Parachutist Badge, Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance and Target Analysis and Exploitation Techniques Course (SFARTAETC).

MSG Keller has been married to his high school sweetheart, Virginia Lauren Paul Keller, since Dec 26, 2003. They have two sons, Gregory Adam Keller, 10 and Wesley Darryl Keller, 9.

CITATION

TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE USASOC INAUGURAL MAJOR GENERAL (RET) JOHN K. SINGLAUB AWARD

TO

MASTER SERGEANT GREGORY KELLER

Master Sergeant Gregory Keller's contributions to the Special Operations Forces over the last two years truly embody the physical bravery, visionary leadership, and strong intellect associated with the MG(R) John K. Singlaub Award. As the Operations Sergeant for Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A) 0241 during RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission -VIII (RSM-VIII), MSG Keller demonstrated personal courage and care for his teammates during a combat operation by selflessly leading an element to kill multiple barricaded Taliban fighters that had pinned down and wounded multiple members of his element. MSG Keller was awarded the Silver Star Medal for his actions. As the Operations Sergeant for SFOD-A 0241 during RSM-XI, ISG Keller's leadership was essential to the train, advise, and assist mission of the newly formed Mobile Strike Kandak among three other Afghan Special Operations units in Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. His quick thinking and adaptability of the operational environment led to continued success. This led to the reason his SFOD-A was praised as one of the most successful of the rotation by the SOJTF-A Commander. His effort denied the Taliban a strategic victory during critical negotiations with the US government by preventing the fall of Tarin Kot, a Provincial capital that was in extreme risk of loss to the Taliban. Upon redeployment, MSG Keller was selected for the Battalion's only SF slated 1 SG position. His dedication and care of Soldiers in that position is the reason he was then selected to serve in an E-9 billet as an E-8, by the Group Command Sergeant Major at the TISC. MSG Keller's persistent success, devotion to fellow Soldiers, and constant dedication to both the Army and the SOF community reflects great credit on himself, the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

FIRST SERGEANT GREGORY KELLER

First Sergeant Gregory Keller's influences on Army Special Operations Forces over the last two years personifies personal courage, model battlefield leadership, and superior tactical and personal capabilities that are associated with the MG(R) John K. Singlaub Award. ISG Keller embodies and lives the ARSOF Next traits of grit, personal courage, and love through his demonstrated devotion to duty, commitment to his brothers-in-arms, and unequalled performance in combat safeguarding our national interests.

1SG Keller has demonstrated unmatched persistence to success throughout his career in I 0th Special Forces Group (Airborne). As an Operations Sergeant for Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A) 0241 during RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission-VIII (RSM-VIII), 1SG Keller demonstrated personal courage as the Ground Force Sergeant Major by leading over 800 Afghan Special Operations Soldiers and 40 US SOF and enablers on 20 partnered combat operations throughout southern Afghanistan. 1SG Keller was a key driving force for his SFOD-A and enabled them to conduct operations in more Afghan Provinces than any other SFOD-A of the deployment and with great success. 1SG Keller's intellect and courage were truly tested during a mission where the partner force suffered numerous casualties and refused to fight. I SG Keller then led an element to retrieve the cut off Commandos by assaulting numerous barricaded shooters. 1SG Keller killed two Taliban himself prior to being wounded and knocked unconscious by grenades. Despite sustaining these injuries, I SG Keller insisted that he remain until the mission was over and no more threats to his team and the local populace existed.

During RSM-XI, ISG Keller was reassigned to one of the most dangerous locations in Afghanistan the day prior to departing on deployment. He truly showed courage by accepting the task fulling knowing there was a KIA at that location weeks before departing for Afghanistan. 1SG Keller's leadership led to numerous highly successful missions that loosened the Taliban's control in the area and helped secure the previously at-risk Provincial Center of Tarin Kot. During Operation FURIOUS DOMINATION, I SG Keller led conventional Army Artillery Soldiers, Rangers, AFSOC enablers, his SFOD-A, and the 100-man partner force in the successful defeat of the decade long held stronghold of the Taliban in Tarin Kot District. ISG Keller was the main driving force in receiving and employing an up armored D7 Bulldozer which helped defeat over 100 IEDs placed in a 500m span of road and over a mile of enemy dug tunnels. The 4-day operation resulted in over 115 enemy Taliban KIA according to initial reports. The local population hailed the SFOD-A and the Commandos for finally bringing security to the area. 1SG Keller was relentless in driving to improve the area, despite many successes in Tarin Kot. Upon the suggestion of the local leaders, his SFOD-A conducted a mission to take back a Police base lost to the Taliban over 10 years prior that was 10 miles behind the forward line of enemy troops. The mission was successful, and the base was seized in a day. The mission made local news and friends of the Partner Force were calling from Kandahar, over 150 km away, to congratulate the Commandos on their success. The Commandos hailed I SG Keller for driving them to be better, despite their past successes.

Audacity is normally described as boldness or a daring quality that normally disregards personal safety or other restrictions. I SG Keller has consistently the past two years placed others and the

mission above his own personal safety when in the face of all danger. During RSM-VIII, on the first Company sized mission, Operation TROJAN BLITZ, 1SG Keller volunteered without hesitation to be the first SFOD-A on the ground to secure the airfield and usher in and provide security to all equipment and unit. 1SG Keller knew this was a critical part of the mission and had to be successful. 1SG Keller spent 24 hours straight ensuring success on the airfield, which was vital to mission success. 1SG Keller earned consistent respect from superiors, peers, and subordinates due to his audacious commitment to the mission and success.

1SG Keller is a natural leader and that is natural from his love for his Soldiers. When he courageously led an assault on a compound containing multiple enemy barricaded fighters who had pinned down his element with machine gun fire and grenades it was because of that love and selflessness. After contact, enemy fighters continued to throw fragmentation grenades to slow his assault. The exchange wounded 1SG Keller with shrapnel as well as bullet wounds at close distance. After the engagement, 1SG Keller refused medical evacuation in order to stay and lead his team and ensure their continued safety. 1SG Keller received the Silver Star Medal for his actions during the operation. During RSM-XI, 1SG Keller served as a mentor for 50 infantry Soldiers, the Ranger Mortar team that was attached, more than 20 enabler personnel, and the Green Berets of SFOD-A 0241. In this capacity, 1SG Keller provided young Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers clear guidance, sound advice, and mentored everyone in both aspects of military and life. He was such a fantastic mentor that when enlistment from the 75th Ranger Regiment to Special Forces was the highest in had been in a decade, and the Special Warfare Center and School asked why, the Rangers cited that 1SG Keller was such an excellent mentor that they wanted to work with more units like his. 1SG Keller did all his actions out of true compassion as a leader and man to ensure he does his best to contribute to holistic Soldiers and the ARSOF community. During RSM-XI when 1SG Keller lost his senior 18E, MSG Michael Riley, it was his love for his team that bonded them together and his leadership that helped them through the most difficult point of their careers. His love for his brothers in arms is justly unsurpassed.

1SG Keller personified toughness above and beyond what is expected of ARSOF Soldiers by overcoming wounds and injuries he sustained in combat to successfully lead a Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha through a highly kinetic deployment to Afghanistan. Despite suffering a fragmentation blast that left him unconscious, being shot through his ear, and metal fragmentation in his chest, he refused to leave the side of his men. After returning from the mission where 1SG Keller earned his Silver Star in 2018, he was evaluated by medical staff in the hospital and found that a piece of shrapnel was just 3mm from tearing through his Aorta of his heart and killing him in less than a minute. He told Doctors, "just let me know what I need to do so I can continue to fight with my team." He wholeheartedly epitomizes the toughness of an ARSOF warrior. Furthermore, 1SG Keller displays audacity when it matters most, by leading Green Berets through harm's way on multiple occasions, utilizing his 15 years of Special Operations experience, technical expertise, and tactical acumen to accomplish the mission as a maneuver leader on over 40 combat operations over the past two years. 1SG Keller has without a doubt left a true impact on everyone he has worked with professionally. 1SG Keller's actions and dedication as a Green Beret, leader, mentor, and brother to the Regiment, make him utmost deserving of the USASOC Inaugural MG (RET) John K. Singlaub Award.

MASTER SERGEANT GREGORY KELLER

USASOC MAJOR GENERAL (RET) JOHN K. SING LAUB AWARD

As the Operations Sergeant for Special Forces Operational Detachment - Alpha (SFOD-A) 0241 during RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission-VIII and XI, MSG Keller received the Silver Star Medal for his heroic actions during a combat operation in which he courageously led the assault element and protected his entire team and partner force that were pinned down by multiple barricaded Taliban fighters.

During RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission-VIII, 1SG Keller demonstrated immense tactical acumen as the lead tactical planner and Ground Force Sergeant Major for 20 partnered and 2 advised combat operations. MSG Keller was the non-commissioned officer in charge of maneuvering over 800 Afghan Special Operations Forces as well as over 40 US Special Forces Operators, Infantry Soldiers, and Special Operations enablers that resulted in over 140 enemy killed in action. MSG Keller went above and beyond the scope of his duties by leading three different Company sized operations comprising of over 200 SOF personnel and an additional 100 support personnel. MSG Keller acted as the NCO in charge of multiple 21-day Mission Support Site that helped support the Company missions. Each Company sized mission was largely successful and led to at least 80 enemy fighters killed in action.

During RSM-VIII, MSG Keller and his leadership instilled such confidence that they were the only SFOD-A approved to execute a Time Sensitive Target (TST) during RSM-VI) by the 75th Ranger Regiment Commander. Additionally, MSG Keller built such trust and further reliability that his SFOD-A was entrusted to conduct a PDSS to confirm or deny the location of a future AOB. MSG Keller utilized the basics in his target language to communicate with a local guard, and confirmed that a better and much less expensive location was available than what US contractors had claimed. MSG Keller saved the US Government approximately five million dollars through expanding his network and utilizing his basic Green Beret skills to ensure accurate and timely information to the SOTF-A headquarters.

As the Operations Sergeant for SFOD-A 0241 during RESOLUTE SUPPORT Mission-XI, MSG Keller performed immaculately despite being reassigned to one of the most dangerous places in Afghanistan two days prior to his departure for RSM-XI. His personal courage and high tactical capabilities during numerous extremely dangerous situations facilitated success over the Taliban for the first time in over a decade in Uruzgan Province. He was the lead tactical planner and key facilitator of uniting the Afghan Police, Army, and local Intelligence units to achieve success, which had never previously been done in the Province.

Prior to redeployment, MSG Keller was hand selected to serve as the Battalion Support Company First Sergeant due to his 'no fail' mentality and habitual success. His operational experience and attention to detail provided the BSC/2/10th SFG (A) with outstanding leadership during a crucial period of property system transference and redeployment as well as realignment of Area of Responsibility. MSG Keller performed exceptionally and due to his outstanding leadership, he was selected by the Group Command Sergeant Major to serve in an E-9 billet as an E-8 as the Technical Information Support Company Sergeant Major.