



RELEASE NUMBER: 080129-03

DATE POSTED: JANUARY 29, 2008

Hundreds honor fallen Special Forces Soldier

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Courtesy of CJSOTF-A Public Affairs, Jan. 29, 2008) – Hundreds of U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coalition partners lined Bagram Airfield's main roadway and tarmac Jan. 27, to pay their last respects to a fallen comrade.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert James Miller, of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Force Group (Airborne), was killed Jan. 25, by Taliban fighters while protecting his Operational Detachment Alpha teammates during combat operations near the village of Barikowt, Nari District, Konar Province, Afghanistan.

Miller and his team were supporting an Afghan Border Police and Coalition Forces security patrol in the Chenar Khar Valley near the Pakistan border when they were attacked.

A tactical vehicle carried Staff Sgt. Miller's flag-draped casket to the waiting U.S. Air Force C-17 cargo aircraft. As the vehicle passed, service members stood at attention and rendered a final salute to their fallen comrade; hundreds more soldiers lined the tarmac. Soldiers from Special Operations Task Force 33 formed a cordon leading to the ramp as his brothers in arms serving as pallbearers escorted Staff Sgt. Miller's remains into the aircraft's empty cargo area.

U.S. Army Brigadier Gen. Joseph Votel, Deputy Commanding General for Operations, Joint Task Force 82; U.S. Army Col. Chris Haas, Commander, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan and Commander, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne); and Lt. Col. Samuel Ashley, Commander, Special Operations Task Force 33, accompanied the escorts onto the aircraft to honor a fellow soldier who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of his country.

Miller was best remembered as a man who always had a smile and a 'can do' attitude. According to his teammates, he was always the first to volunteer for any task.

"Robby was the type of soldier that saw the hardships before him and stepped up to the challenge," Lt. Col. Ashley eulogized during a memorial ceremony, Jan. 28, at Bagram Airfield. "He understood the hazards of combat and the risks of his service to our nation. He willingly bore the burden of the Soldier. He was the epitome of the SF soldier. He was a warrior among warriors."

U.S. Army Capt. John Bishop, of Special Operations Task Force 33, and Miller's former detachment commander also spoke at the ceremony. "He was always quick to volunteer and never thought it should be any other way. On numerous occasions when the Detachment was faced with a difficult task, Robby would just stand up and say, 'I got this one, I'll do it, send me.'"

Jan. 25, Miller found himself willingly leading a team of Afghan National Security Forces and Coalition soldiers during a combat reconnaissance patrol in Konar Province, near the Pakistan border. Insurgents hiding in a structure attacked Miller's team. A fellow teammate called for close-air support to drop ordnance on the insurgent position, disrupting their attack. When the combined patrol moved toward the structure to check for any remaining enemy threats, insurgents again fired using heavy weapons.

Miller's team captain was seriously wounded within the first minutes of the attack. While his commander was moved to safety, Miller returned fire. At great personal risk to himself, Miller remained at the front of the patrol and continued to lay down suppressive fire on multiple insurgent positions, allowing his wounded commander to be pulled out of the line of fire, ultimately saving his life. Miller's personal courage under intense enemy fire enabled the entire patrol to gain cover and return fire. Even while injured by direct enemy small arms and machine gun fire, Miller continued to employ his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon and grenades to suppress enemy fire and protect his teammates.


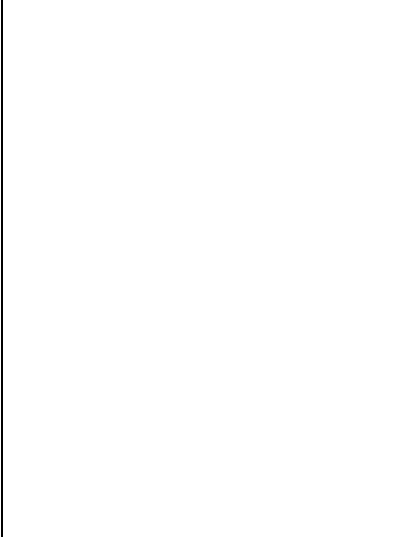
Staff Sgt. Miller enlisted as a Special Forces trainee Aug. 14, 2003. He graduated from Infantry Basic Training and Airborne School at Ft. Benning, Ga., Jan. 6. Miller graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course Sep. 26, 2004, and the Special Forces Weapons Sergeant Course Mar. 4, 2005. Miller received his coveted Special Forces Tab and was promoted to Sergeant after graduating from the Special Operations French Language Training Course, Sep. 30, 2005. That same day he was assigned to Company A, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Force Group (Airborne), Ft. Bragg, N.C.

He deployed to Afghanistan to support Operation Enduring Freedom from Aug. 2006 to March 2007. During this deployment, Miller received two Army Commendation Medals for Valor for his courage under fire.

Miller returned to Afghanistan for his second tour in Oct. 2007, where he served as a Weapons Sergeant for his team.

Lt. Col. Ashley completed the memorial by stating, "The motto of our Regiment is 'Free the Oppressed.' Special Forces soldiers have long lived by this creed and today, we all carry this torch. Robby sacrificed his life bringing freedom to the oppressed people of Afghanistan. He placed his life on the line so that others would have a chance to experience freedom."

Miller is survived by his parents and seven brothers and sisters.

	<p>Hundreds of service members honor the life of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Jan. 27. Miller was killed by Taliban insurgents Jan. 25, while protecting his Operational Detachment Alpha teammates during combat operations near the village of Barikowt, Nari District, Konar Province, Afghanistan. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Corey Dennis.</p>
	<p>U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert James Miller was killed by Taliban insurgents Jan. 25, while protecting his Operational Detachment Alpha teammates during combat operations near the village of Barikowt, Nari District, Konar Province, Afghanistan. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Corey Dennis.</p>
	<p>Service members from Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan gather for a memorial ceremony to honor the life of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller at Camp Vance, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Jan. 28. Miller was killed by Taliban insurgents Jan. 25, while protecting his Operational Detachment Alpha teammates during combat operations near the village of Barikowt, Nari District, Konar Province, Afghanistan. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Corey Dennis.</p>
	<p>A memorial commemorates the life of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert James Miller during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Jan. 28. Miller was killed by Taliban insurgents Jan. 25, while protecting his Operational Detachment Alpha teammates during combat operations near the village of Barikowt, Nari District, Konar Province, Afghanistan. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Corey Dennis.</p>

