

Medal of Honor

Master Sgt. Earl D. Plumlee



On 16 December 2021, President Joseph Biden presented the Medal of Honor to Master Sgt. Earl D. Plumlee of Clinton, Oklahoma, for his gallant actions on 28 August 2013 while serving as a weapons sergeant assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), at Forward Operating Base Ghazni in Afghanistan.

On that day, Afghan insurgents suddenly attacked the complex, and a massive explosion opened a sixty-foot breach in the base's perimeter wall. Ten insurgents wearing Afghan National Army uniforms and suicide vests poured through the hole in the wall.

Intent on defending the base, Plumlee and five other special operations soldiers mounted two vehicles and headed toward the detonation site. Plumlee's driver deliberately maneuvered the vehicle into enemy fire to shield three other soldiers, two of whom were injured. This decision placed the vehicle under enemy fire from the front and right side. With a disregard for his own safety, Plumlee used his body to shield the driver from enemy fire before he drew his weapon and advanced toward the enemy force, engaging with multiple insurgents before killing two of them.

Plumlee found cover but left the safety of it and advanced alone toward enemy forces. He was wounded by a detonating suicide vest but continued to engage the enemy. Moving from cover to counterattack the infiltrators, Plumlee ran to assist a wounded staff sergeant, carry him to safety, and render first aid, though the soldier died later. Afterward, he methodically cleared the area, remained in a security posture, and continued to scan for any incoming threats.

Biden said that Plumlee earned the award "for conspicuous gallantry at the risk of his life and above and beyond the call of duty. [Then] Staff Sergeant Earl D. Plumlee distinguished himself by acts of gallantry above and beyond the call of duty on 28 August 2013, while serving as a weapons sergeant, C Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in support of Enduring Freedom." After returning from Afghanistan, Plumlee completed nine months of physical rehabilitation, while



Medal of Honor recipient U.S. Army Master Sgt. Earl D. Plumlee (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

continuing to serve in the 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).

To learn more about Plumlee's award, visit <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/plumlee/>. ■



Then Staff Sgt. Earl Plumlee poses for a photo during predeployment training circa 2013 in Yakima, Washington. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)