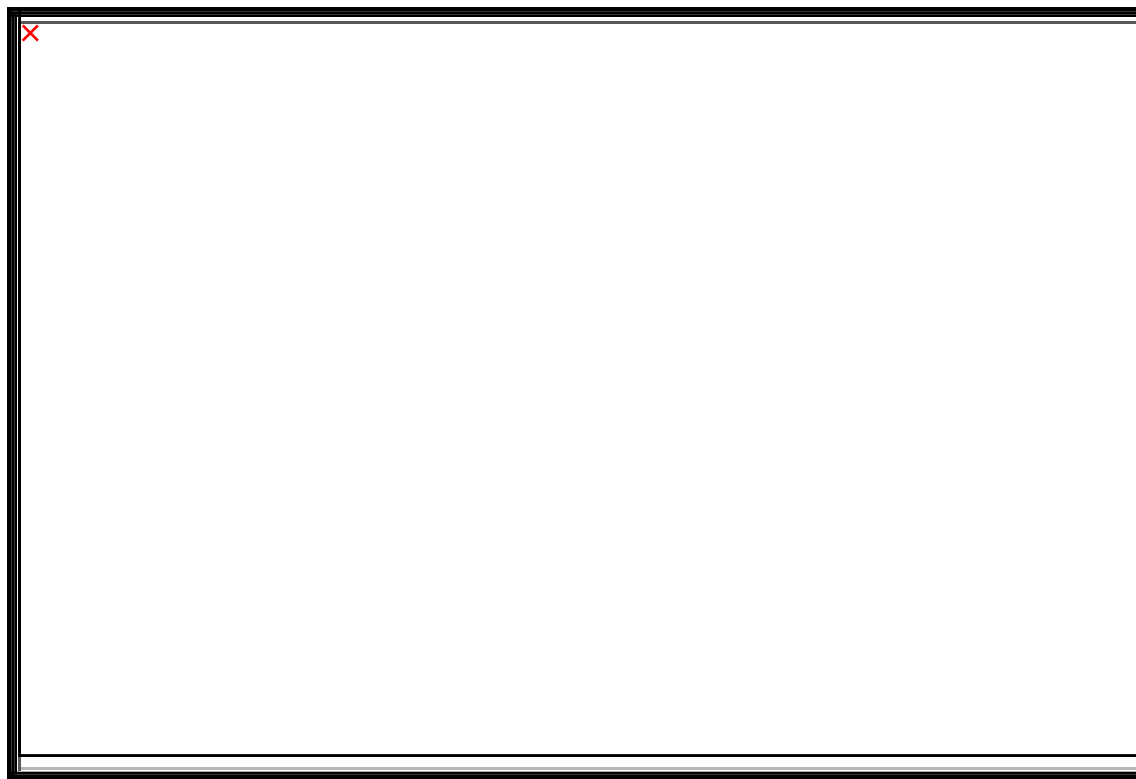


Tangible symbol of bravery: Community gathers to commemorate heroic deeds of SFC Randall Shughart

Tangible symbol of bravery: Community gathers to commemorate heroic deeds of SFC Randall Shughart

His actions embodied everything that Soldiers and Service members strive for, said Col. Matt Dawson, Army Heritage and Education Center historian who recounted the challenges of Somalia, 20 years ago, during a ceremony to mark the deeds of a Soldier: a Quiet Professional.

See a video of the ceremony at http://youtu.be/_fdCOKCxuok



Hundreds gathered Thursday, Oct. 3 for a memorial to Sgt 1st Class Randall Shughart who gave his life for another Oct. 3, 1993, in Mogadishu, Somalia.

His selfless actions were honored by the nation with the

Medal of Honor.

His legacy was revisited by friends, family, Newville neighbors, Big Spring School colleagues, military from JROTC through Army War College students and International officers and more. They gathered for the dedication of a new memorial at his grave site in Carlisle, near his Pennsylvania home town.

The event happened because of a grass-roots community effort that spread through southcentral Pennsylvania, through the Special Forces Association and a host of military and veteran organizations to create a marker that



was more than the humble, dedicated Randy Shughart would have asked for, according to his brother Michael.

Replacing a small grave marker, the new memorial design includes a granite slab with the Medal of Honor citation engraved upon it, and a distinctive

granite bench bearing a quote from his widow, Stephanie:

"It takes a remarkable person to not just read a creed, or memorize a creed, but to live a creed."

"This beautiful stone memorial that we dedicate today ... symbolizes a group of fellows Soldiers who never forgot a buddy, Randall Shughart, said Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo who spoke at Westminster Cemetery about the meaning of Shughart's actions and the meaning of his comrades' memories.

"They saw the physical public marker in this cemetery ... and felt it was appropriately humble and therefore a match to his personality. But it did not seem right for the magnitude of the legacy Randy left: a legacy and a memory other Americans and all passersby actually needed to see.

"In seeing [the memorial], perhaps more would hear the story of the 3rd of October 1993 and learn of the bravery of many young men and women -- but in particular, learn about the valor of a young man from Central Pennsylvania, feel gratitude that a family raised a Randy Shughart and a military trained him -- and hopefully think about what it takes to keep this nation strong, maybe even consider following in Randy's footsteps.

"When Sgt 1st Class Shughart and Master Sgt. Gordon saw U.S. aircraft down in Mogadishu, Somalia, and saw fellow Soldiers in trouble, their reflexive reaction was to join them, said Cucolo. "Their character would not permit any other option. Their minds very quickly moved from recognition of the downed helicopter to the need to act:

My fellow Soldiers are in trouble ...

They trust that I will do everything to save them ...

I will not let them down.

“They asked to be put in against overwhelming odds,” said Cucolo, “and they were denied – *unacceptable* – so they asked again and were again denied – *still unacceptable* – and Gary Gordon pressed a third time, and finally they were inserted more than 100 meters from the crash site. They found their way in, linked up with the beleaguered survivors of Super 64: Bill Cleveland, Ray Frank, Tommy Field and Mike Durant.

“They then set about defending their position and killing the enemy – *I will not let you down.*”

Randy, calmly handed a weapon to Mike Durant – *we’re in this together* ... one last radio call for assistance, and, after the last round fired, finished his defense of his comrades in hand-to-hand combat.

Speaking to a mixed audience of all military services – Active, Guard, Reserve – International officers, and “a community who appreciates us,” he said, “I am confident in our future. You –all you present today – are a symbol of this commitment and this fighting spirit. You will not let Randy or his actions be forgotten.

“You did not let his memory down.”

Medal of Honor Citation:

Sergeant First Class Shughart, United States Army, distinguished himself by actions above and beyond the call of duty on 3 October 1993, while serving as a Sniper Team Member, United States Army Special Operations Command with Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu, Somalia. Sergeant First Class Shughart provided precision sniper fires from the lead helicopter during an assault on a building and at two helicopter crash sites, while subjected to intense automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenade fires. While providing critical suppressive fires at the second crash site, Sergeant First Class Shughart and his team leader learned that ground forces were not immediately available to secure the site. Sergeant First Class Shughart and his team leader 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 their third request to be inserted, Sergeant First Class Shughart and his team leader received permission to perform this volunteer mission. When debris and enemy ground fires at the site caused them to abort the first attempt, Sergeant First Class Shughart and his team leader were inserted one hundred meters south of the crash site. Equipped with only his sniper rifle and a pistol, Sergeant First Class Shughart and his team leader, 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. Sergeant First Class Shughart pulled the pilot and the other crew members from the aircraft, establishing a perimeter which placed him and his fellow sniper in the most vulnerable position. Sergeant First Class Shughart used

his long range rifle and side arm to kill an undetermined number of attackers while traveling the perimeter, protecting the downed crew. Sergeant First Class Shughart continued his protective fire until he depleted his ammunition and was fatally wounded. His actions saved the pilot's life. Sergeant First Class Shughart's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest standards of military service and reflect great credit upon him, his unit and the United States Army.

For more about the context of the heroic actions of SFC Randy Shughart and MSG Gary Gordon, see --

“Somalia 20 years later: lessons learned, relearned and forgotten,” by Mike Marra and Dr. Bill Pierce, U.S. Army War College, published by Small Wars Journal

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/somalia-20-years-later-%E2%80%93-lessons-learned-re-learned-and-forgotten>

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 15 October 2013