

20th SOS Distinguished Flying Cross Citations

Captain John F. Vandenbemden distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as a CV-22B Mission Aircraft Commander, 20th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron, Joint Special Operations Air Component Central, Special Operations Command Central, on 5 December 2014. On that date, Captain Vandenbemden's outstanding leadership and tactical ability was essential to the successful evacuation of critically wounded personnel during a presidentially-directed, nighttime special operations mission. Shortly after a ground assault commenced, Captain Vandenbemden was notified that the assault force had come under heavy enemy fire and was requesting urgent evacuation of critically wounded personnel. Exhibiting superior flying skill, Captain Vandenbemden proceeded directly to the target area where his CV-22 was exposed to enemy fire. Undeterred by the intensity of the enemy fire and friendly containment fires, Captain Vandenbemden skillfully executed an extremely difficult, 80 foot restricted visibility approach to within meters of the wounded personnel. Captain Vandenbemden also ensured both patients were securely loaded while simultaneously receiving distress calls that his aircraft was being directly engaged by enemy fire. Moreover, he performed evasive maneuvers and flew a terrain masked profile, improving the aircraft's defenses against enemy fire and enabling the flight to safely depart the objective area. Captain Vandenbemden also coordinated for critical aerial refueling, guaranteeing the rapid and safe transport of the wounded personnel to a United States Navy vessel to undergo immediate surgery. Upon reaching the vessel, he and his crew executed the first ever CV-22 shipboard contingency landing. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Vandenbemden reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Captain Jonathan D. Seagle distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as a CV-22B Mission Pilot, 20th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron, Joint Special Operations Air Component Central, Special Operations Command Central, on 5 December 2014. On that date, as part of a three ship of CV-22 Ospreys, Captain Seagle's actions were essential to the successful evacuation of critically wounded personnel during a presidentially-directed, nighttime special operations mission. Shortly after a ground assault commenced, Captain Seagle was notified that the assault force had come under heavy enemy fire and was requesting urgent evacuation of critically wounded personnel. Exhibiting superior airmanship, Captain Seagle quickly identified ingress and egress routes and plotted potential unplanned landing zones in the objective area. Undeterred by the intensity of the enemy fire and friendly containment fires, Captain Seagle identified the team, cleared the landing zone and provided critical approach calls, leading to the flawless execution of an extremely difficult, 80 foot restricted visibility landing. Moreover, Captain Seagle ensured all patients were securely loaded while simultaneously receiving distress calls that his aircraft was being directly engaged by enemy fire. During egress from the objective area, he performed evasive maneuvers and flew a terrain masked profile, improving the aircraft's defenses and enabling the flight to safely depart the area. Furthermore, Captain Seagle coordinated for critical aerial refueling, guaranteeing the safe transport of wounded personnel to a United States Navy vessel, to undergo immediate surgery. Finally, upon reaching the vessel, he and his crew executed the first ever CV-22 shipboard contingency landing. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Seagle reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Staff Sergeant Daniel J. Teel distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as a CV-22B Special Mission Aviator, 20th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron, Joint Special Operations Air Component Central, Special Operations Command Central on 5 December 2014. On that date, as part of a three ship of CV-22 Ospreys, Sergeant Teel was essential to the successful evacuation of critically wounded personnel during the execution of a presidentially approved night time special operations mission in support of national objectives. Shortly after the ground assault began, Sergeant Teel's aircraft received an urgent call for the evacuation of critically wounded personnel from a dangerous insurgent held village. Enroute to the landing zone, Sergeant Teel, expertly utilizing aircraft systems, discovered the aircraft was overweight and immediately initiated fuel dumping procedures to ensure power was available for the approach. After landing, while wounded personnel were being loaded on the aircraft, Sergeant Teel's CV-22 came under enemy fire and he prepared the aircraft for takeoff. Sergeant Teel then provided critical threat and evasive maneuver calls while conducting aircraft system battle damage checks. Dangerously low on fuel, Sergeant Teel prepared the aircraft for aerial refueling, enabling the safe transport of the wounded to a United States Navy ship, thus executing the first ever CV-22 shipboard contingency landing. The professional heroism and airmanship displayed by Sergeant Teel reflect great upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Staff Sergeant Spencer J. Seymore distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as CV-22B Special Mission Aviator, 20th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron, Joint Special Operations Air Component Central, Special Operations Command Central on 5 December 2014. On that date, as part of a 3-ship of CV-22 Ospreys, Sergeant Seymore was essential to the successful evacuation of critically wounded personnel during the execution of a presidentially approved night time special operations mission in support of national objectives. Shortly after the ground assault began Sergeant Seymore aircraft received an urgent request for the evacuation of wounded personnel from a dangerous insurgent held village. Undeterred by the intensity of the enemy fire, Sergeant Seymore expertly manned the aircraft's .50 caliber weapons system while visually clearing and providing approach calls for a successful 80 foot dust out landing. Without regard for his own safety, Sergeant Seymore courageously departed the aircraft, exposing himself to incoming fire in order to aid in loading the critically wounded. During egress from the target, Sergeant Seymore expertly provided critical threat and evasive maneuver calls to the crew to defend against enemy fire, and configured the cabin for aerial refueling enabling the transportation of the wounded to an awaiting United States Navy ship, executing the first ever CV-22 shipboard contingency landing. The professional heroism and airmanship displayed by Sergeant Seymore reflect great upon himself and the United States Air Force.