

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE SILVER STAR

TO

DENNIS C. KELSCH

Staff Sergeant Dennis C. Kelsch distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United States, Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component-Afghanistan on 25 April 2018, during Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL in support of the Resolute Support mission. On that date, during a night direct action raid against a High Value Target, Sergeant Kelsch willingly exposed himself to effective enemy fire in order to conduct danger close fire missions from AC-130 gunships using 40 millimeter air to ground munitions 35-40 meters from his position. Minutes later and without regard for personal safety, Sergeant Kelsch willingly exposed himself to effective enemy fire again, by closing with the enemy in order to adjust fire and save the life of a wounded American teammate, dragging him to safety under fire. While recovering his teammate, Sergeant Kelsch was hit by enemy fire and adjusted his fire mission to include 105 millimeter rounds on a heavy machine gun position 60 meters away. Sergeant Kelsch continued to suppress enemy threat with air to ground munitions allowing the assault force to fall back, at which time he positively identified the enemy defensive fighting position with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft. Nearing the no later than exfiltration timeline and having incurred a wounded American and Afghanistatn teammate, Sergeant Kelsch directed a coordinated attack from two F-16s using precision guided 500 pound bombs and 105 millimeter rounds from the AC-130 neutralizing all remaining threats to the assault force. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Kelsch has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

