

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Officer Ashley Guindon.

Officer Guindon was killed in the line of duty Saturday while responding to a call for help from a domestic violence victim.

She was 28 years old, and during her short life, Officer Guindon had done more for others than most of us will ever do. She spent 6 years in the Marine Corps Reserves before interning and ultimately working with the Prince William County Police Department.

At funeral services Tuesday, Officer Guindon was remembered as a police-woman and as a peace officer.

In Prince William County, the Police Department's stated mission is to "enhance the quality of life by providing police services through shared responsibility with the public."

As members of the public, it is incumbent upon us to respect the work that police officers do, the sacrifices that they make, and the lives that they touch across the Commonwealth and the United States of America.

God rest you and keep your family, Officer Guindon. Thank you for your service.

#### CONGRATULATING NAVY SEAL EDWARD BYERS

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to add the congratulations and commendations from the people of Ohio's Ninth District to Navy SEAL Edward Byers for his incredible valor, and I thank the President of the United States for awarding him this week the Medal of Honor.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, and raised in Grand Rapids, Ohio, SEAL Team Member Byers is a credit, not only to his service, but to the patriotic people who raised him, and for his enlistment in the U.S. military.

The bravery that he exhibited and the training and readiness that he exemplified through his valorous service in Afghanistan will go down in the annals of American history.

He is only one of a handful of SEALs who have been awarded the Medal of Honor. He handled the ceremony with great dignity, and we send our love and congratulations to his wife, to his family, and to all those who have the pleasure of knowing this really great American.

Congratulations, SEAL Team Member Edward Byers. You distinguished yourself on behalf of the people of your country and for freedom-loving people around our world.

Mr. Speaker, I will include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD two articles about this Toledo native.

[From The Plain Dealer, Feb. 26, 2016]

TOLEDO NATIVE EDWARD BYERS WILL BE  
AWARDED MEDAL OF HONOR  
(By Brian Albrecht)

CLEVELAND, OHIO.—The rescue of an American hostage in Afghanistan in 2012 will result in Toledo native and Navy SEAL Edward C. Byers Jr. being awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama in a ceremony at the White House on February 29.

The Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator is only the 11th living service member to be awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery displayed in Afghanistan.

According to Navy information, Byers was born in Toledo in 1979 and grew up in Grand Rapids, Ohio. After graduating from Otsego High School, where he played varsity soccer, he joined the Navy in 1998.

Byers attended hospital corpsman school and also completed a basic underwater demolition/SEAL course and special operations combat medic course in 2003.

He went on 11 overseas deployments, including nine combat tours.

The Medal of Honor is awarded to members of the armed forces who distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their own lives above and beyond the call of duty.

The mission that led to his Medal of Honor award involved the rescue of Dr. Dilip Joseph, an American who was abducted with his driver and Afghan interpreter in December of 2012.

U.S. intelligence located Joseph in a remote mountainous area in a small, single-room building, and Byers was part of the team assigned to the recovery mission.

In a subsequent Navy Interview, Byers detailed his role in that mission:

"So that night was December 8 in Eastern Afghanistan, it was a cool night, we got off the helicopters, did a four- or five-hour pretty arduous hike through the mountains, and upon getting to our target building where we assumed the American hostage was at, our point man Nick Cheque, he was right in front of me, he saw a guard come out of the door, he engaged that guard and we started sprinting towards the door.

"Nick made his way in, and I made my way in right behind him, and I went down by the wall, and I engaged an enemy by the backside of the wall. And then I saw another person moving across the floor, so by the time I got to him he was on his back and I was able to get down on top of him and straddle him with my knees, and I had to adjust my night vision to try to get some facial recognition.

"At the same time this is happening I'm calling out trying to find the location of the American hostage. And finally he spoke up and it was at that time I engaged the person I was on top of and jumped off, and jumped off of the guy I was on and jumped onto the doctor who was about three or four, maybe five feet to my right.

"The reason I did that is because I was wearing body armor, so I wanted to protect him from any other potential threats in the room.

"Anyone who's been in combat knows that in those moments you either react, or you get killed.

"When I did that there was a guy that was right behind him within arm's reach, who was armed, and I was able to pin that guy to the wall by his throat, kind-of holding the doctor, and waiting for my teammates to come in and take care of the threat that was right next to us. When I was done, I still laid on top of him, and kept asking him 'hey can you walk,' you know, and 'is there anything medically wrong with you,' because our goal is to bring this guy back alive.

So, he said he was fine, and once we got outside, I noticed that our medics were working on Nick, and you know, being a medic myself I passed off the American hostage off to our other teammates and I went over to work on Nick, and did resuscitative efforts on him all the way to the hospital, where he was announced dead there."

The official citation noted: "Chief Petty Officer Byers displayed superior gallantry, extraordinary heroism at grave personal risk, dedication to his teammates, and calm tactical leadership while liberating Dr. Dilip Joseph from captivity."

Byers said that when he found out he was being awarded the Medal of Honor, "I felt very honored and very humbled because I'm gonna be a representative for the Navy and the naval special warfare community, and there's a weight that's carried with that.

"And that weight is the sacrifices that everybody has made within this community. Guys like Nick Cheque and all of our other brothers that have fallen, is it's an affirmation of the job that we do, and an appreciation of the job we do."

In the interview, Byers also credited the support of his family, and noted that when he told his mother about the award ceremony, "the first question out of her mouth is 'Do you think I can come to it?' And I said of course, mom, I think you'll be able to come to it."

He also noted that his daughter "knows that I'm daddy, and she loves me just for that. If you talk to her one-on-one, she'll tell you all the five nicknames she has for me, and none of them includes 'hero.'"

He concluded, "I'm gonna continue to be a SEAL. And I'm gonna take whatever job or mission is next for me, and just continue doing that. I don't have any plans on changing my job at this time. I still love what I do, and as long as I love what I do I'll continue doing it."

Byers' personal decorations include the Bronze Star with Valor (five awards), the Purple Heart (two awards), the Joint Service Commendation Medal with Valor, the Navy Commendation Medal (three awards, one with Valor), the Combat Action ribbon (two awards), and the Good Conduct Medal (five awards).

He is one of only eight living Navy Medal of Honor recipients. There are 78 living recipients total.

Ohio has had 319 other Medal of Honor recipients with a connection to this state, dating back to the Civil War.

#### SUMMARY OF ACTION

SENIOR CHIEF SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR (SEAL) EDWARD C. BYERS JR.: FOR ACTIONS DURING OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM ON DEC. 8, 2012

Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Edward C. Byers Jr., United States Navy, distinguished himself by heroic gallantry as an Assault Team Member attached to a Joint Task Force in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM on 8 December 2012.

#### SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

Dr. Dilip Joseph is an American citizen, who was abducted with his driver and Afghan interpreter on 5 December 2012. Intelligence reports indicated that Dr. Joseph might be transported to another location as early as 9 December 2012. Dr. Joseph was being held in a small, single-room building.

The target compound was located in a remote area beside a mountain in the Qarghah'i District of Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Chief Byers was part of the rescue team that planned to make entry into the room of guards where the hostage was believed to be located. Success of the rescue operation relied upon surprise, speed, and aggressive action. Trading personal security

for speed of action was inherent to the success of this rescue mission. Each assaulter in the rescue force volunteered for this operation with full appreciation for the risks they were to undertake.

With the approval of the Commander of all International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan, the rescue force launched from its forward operating base. The infiltration was an exhaustive patrol across unimproved trails and mountainous terrain. After nearly four hours of patrolling, the rescue force was positioned to make its assault on the target compound.

As the patrol closed to within 25 meters of the target building, a guard became aware of the rescue force. The forward-most assaulter shot at the guard and ran towards the door to make entry as the guard disappeared inside. Chief Byers was the second assaulter in a sprint towards the door. Six layers of blankets securely fastened to the ceiling and walls served as the Afghan door. While Chief Byers tried to rip down the blankets, the first assaulter pushed his way through the doorway and was immediately shot by enemy AK-47 fire. Chief Byers, fully aware of the hostile threat inside the room, boldly entered and immediately engaged a guard pointing an AK-47 towards him. As he was engaging that guard, another adult male darted towards the corner of the room. Chief Byers could not distinguish if the person may have been the hostage scrambling away or a guard attempting to arm himself with an AK-47 that lay in the corner. Chief Byers tackled the unknown male and seized control of him. While in hand-to-hand combat, Chief Byers maintained control of the unknown male with one hand, while adjusting the focus of his night vision goggles (NVGs) with his other. Once his NVGs were focused, he recognized that the male was not the hostage and engaged the struggling armed guard.

By now other team members had entered the room and were calling to Dr. Joseph to identify himself. Chief Byers heard an unknown voice speak English from his right side. He immediately leaped across the room and selflessly flung his body on top of the American hostage, shielding him from the continued rounds being fired across the room. Almost simultaneously, Chief Byers identified an additional enemy fighter directly behind Dr. Joseph. While covering the hostage with his body, Chief Byers was able to pin the enemy combatant to the wall with his hand around the enemy's throat. Unable to fire any effective rounds into the enemy, Chief Byers was able to restrain the combatant enough to enable his teammate to fire precision shots, eliminating the final threat within the room.

Chief Byers quickly talked to Dr. Joseph, confirming that he was able to move. He and his Team Leader stood Dr. Joseph up, calmed him, and let him know he was safe with American Forces. Once Dr. Joseph was moved to the helicopter-landing zone, Chief Byers, a certified paramedic and 18D medic, assisted with the rendering of medical aid to the urgent surgical assaulter. Chief Byers and others performed CPR during the 40-minute flight to Bagram Airfield where his teammate was declared deceased.

Chief Petty Officer Byers displayed superior gallantry, extraordinary heroism at grave personal risk, dedication to his teammates, and calm tactical leadership while liberating Dr. Dilip Joseph from captivity. He is unquestionably deserving of the Medal of Honor.

#### OFFICIAL CITATION

CHIEF SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR (SEA, AIR, AND LAND) EDWARD C. BYERS, JR. UNITED STATES NAVY

For service as set forth in the following citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Hostage Rescue Force Team Member in Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from 8 to 9 December 2012. As the rescue force approached the target building, an enemy sentry detected them and darted inside to alert his fellow captors. The sentry quickly re-emerged, and the lead assaulter attempted to neutralize him. Chief Byers with his team sprinted to the door of the target building. As the primary breacher, Chief Byers stood in the doorway fully exposed to enemy fire while ripping down six layers of heavy blankets fastened to the inside ceiling and walls to clear a path for the rescue force. The first assaulter pushed his way through the blankets, and was mortally wounded by enemy small arms fire from within. Chief Byers, completely aware of the imminent threat, fearlessly rushed into the room and engaged an enemy guard aiming an AK-47 at him. He then tackled another adult male who had darted towards the corner of the room. During the ensuing hand-to-hand struggle, Chief Byers confirmed the man was not the hostage and engaged him. As other rescue team members called out to the hostage, Chief Byers heard a voice respond in English and raced toward it. He jumped atop the American hostage and shielded him from the high volume of fire within the small room. While covering the hostage with his body, Chief Byers immobilized another guard with his bare hands, and restrained the guard until a teammate could eliminate him. His bold and decisive actions under fire saved the lives of the hostage and several of his teammates. By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of near certain death, Chief Petty Officer Byers reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

#### BIOGRAPHY

SENIOR CHIEF SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR (SEAL) EDWARD C. BYERS JR.

Senior Chief Edward C. Byers Jr. was born in Toledo, Ohio in 1979. He grew up in Grand Rapids, Ohio. In 1997, he graduated from Otsego High School where he played varsity soccer. Byers joined the Navy in September 1998, and subsequently attended Recruit Training and Corpsman "A" School in Great Lakes, Illinois.

Byers started his naval career as a Hospital Corpsman. In 1998, he was assigned to Great Lakes Naval Hospital. In 1999, he served with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where he deployed with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard USS AUSTIN (LPD 4). During deployment he earned his Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) badge and Fleet Marine Force (FMF) warfare device.

In 2002, Byers attended Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training and graduated with Class 242. After graduation, he attended the Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) course. SOCS Byers has been assigned to East Coast SEAL Teams. He was promoted to the rank of Senior Chief Petty Officer in January of 2016.

Byers has deployed overseas 11 times with nine combat tours. His personal decorations include the Bronze Star with Valor (five awards), the Purple Heart (two awards), the Joint Service Commendation Medal with Valor, the Navy Commendation Medal (three awards, one with Valor), the Combat Action ribbon (two awards), and the Good Conduct Medal (five awards).

Byers holds a National Paramedics License, and has studied Strategic Studies and Defense Analysis at Norwich University. Byers is married and has a daughter.

#### NAVY MEDAL OF HONOR FACTS

Senior Chief Byers is the 6th Navy SEAL in history to receive the Medal of Honor.

Senior Chief Byers is one of only eight living Navy Medal of Honor recipients. There are 78 living recipients total.

There have been 745 Medals of Honor awarded to Navy personnel. (308 of those were for actions during the Civil War)

Only two Navy service members have received the Medal of Honor for actions subsequent to the Vietnam War, and both of those awards were posthumous. (Lieutenant Michael Murphy and Petty Officer Michael Monsoor, both SEALs)

The most recent Navy recipient of the Medal of Honor was Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Monsoor, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by President George W. Bush on Apr. 8, 2008.

The most recent living Navy recipient of the Medal of Honor was Robert Ingram, who left the Navy in 1968, and was later awarded the Medal of Honor by President Bill Clinton on Jul. 10, 1998 for actions during the Vietnam War.

Senior Chief Byers is the first living active duty member of the U.S. Navy to receive the Medal of Honor since Apr. 6, 1976, the late Rear Admiral James Stockdale and Lieutenant Thomas Norris (also a SEAL) each received the decoration from President Gerald Ford.

Senior Chief Byers is the first living active duty enlisted member of the U.S. Navy to receive the Medal of Honor since Petty Officer Michael Thornton (also a SEAL) was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Richard Nixon on Oct., 15 1973.

This is the 14th Medal of Honor awarded for actions in Afghanistan. Including Senior Chief Byers, 11 of those 14 awards were to living recipients. Four Medals of Honor were awarded posthumously for actions in Iraq.

#### CLOSING GUANTANAMO BAY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the cold-blooded, calculating terrorists sitting in Guantanamo murdered and plan to continue killing Americans.

Since President Obama took office, he has released 150 terrorists back to their home countries. In fact, Spanish and Moroccan police just arrested four suspected members of a jihadi cell who recruited fighters for the Islamic State. One is described as a former Gitmo detainee who formerly fought with militants against Americans in Afghanistan.

The 91 high-security prisoners remaining at Guantanamo committed some of the most repulsive crimes known to all of us.

Severely lacking in detail, the plan to close Gitmo fails to describe where, under what authority, and at what cost the relocation of these terrorists will be.

Mr. Speaker, it is against the law to transfer terrorist detainees to American soil without congressional approval.

The United States should do everything it can to keep terrorists out of our country, not purposely bring them here.