

# MEDAL OF HONOR

SAL GIUNTA



  
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# MEDAL OF HONOR

SAL GIUNTA

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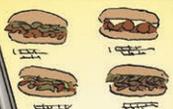
**GENERAL DYNAMICS**

IT WAS A MOONLIT NIGHT IN THE KORENGAL VALLEY NEAR THE AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN BORDER, A PLACE RENAMED BY US SOLDIERS 'THE VALLEY OF DEATH.'

# SAL GIUNTA



SAL GIUNTA WAS WORKING AT A SUBWAY SANDWICH SHOP IN CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA WHEN HE DECIDED TO ENLIST IN THE ARMY IN 2003.

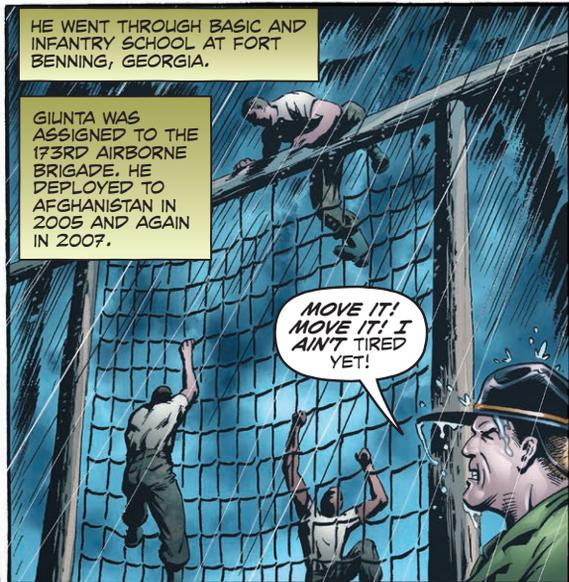


AND BANANA PEPPERS AND OLIVES...



HE WENT THROUGH BASIC AND INFANTRY SCHOOL AT FORT BENNING, GEORGIA.

GIUNTA WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE. HE DEPLOYED TO AFGHANISTAN IN 2005 AND AGAIN IN 2007.



OCTOBER 25,  
2007.

GIUNTA'S RIFLE SQUAD WAS RETURNING TO THEIR OUTPOST AFTER A DAY OF PROVIDING OVERWATCH FOR OPERATIONS IN THE VALLEY.



THE REST OF FIRST PLATOON FOLLOWED AT A DISTANCE.



SECOND PLATOON MOVED ALONG THE VALLEY FLOOR ON THE FAR SIDE OF A RIVER THAT SEPARATED THEM FROM THEIR GUARDIAN ANGELS ABOVE.





THE FULL MOON ALLOWED THEM TO MOVE WITHOUT THE AID OF NIGHT VISION GEAR.

HEADS ON A SWIVEL, EVERYONE.



BUT IT ALSO EXPOSED THEM TO THE EYES OF THE TALIBAN.



FURIOUS FIRE FROM TWO FRONTS TOOK DOWN THE SOLDIERS WALKING DOWN THE POINT WITH SERIOUS WOUNDS.



AS MANY AS FIFTEEN TALIBAN TRAINED FIRE ON THE RIFLE TEAM FROM CONCEALED POSITIONS.



FLYING AIR SUPPORT ABOVE, APACHE GUNSHIPS COULD SEE THE CLASSIC L-SHAPED AMBUSH BELOW THEM.

UNABLE TO ENGAGE! FRIENDLIES AND UN-FRIENDLIES IN TOO CLOSE PROXIMITY!



UNDER HEAVY RIFLE AND ROCKET ATTACK, GILNTA DIRECTED RETURN FIRE AT THE ENEMY POSITIONS.

CONTACT FRONT!  
CONTACT LEFT!



HE SAW SQUAD LEADER GALLARDO FALL WITH A WOUND TO THE HEAD.

GALLARDO!



DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, GILNTA RAN FOR HIS FALLEN COMRADE UNDER COVERING FIRE FROM PFCs GARRETT CLARY AND KALEB CASEY.



TWO ROUNDS STRUCK GILNTA; ONE TO HIS CERAMIC ARMOR CHEST PLATE AND ANOTHER BOUNCED OFF A ROCKET LAUNCHER STRAPPED TO HIS BACK.



THROUGH A STORM OF SHRAPNEL AND SMALL ARMS FIRE, GILNTA CONTINUED DRAGGING GALLARDO TO COVER.



THE WOUND THROUGH GALLARDO'S HELMET TURNED OUT TO BE A MINOR GOUGE TO HIS SCALP.

BUT THERE WERE TWO MORE WOUNDED MEN OUT THERE IN THE DARK.



RATHER THAN STAY IN PLACE, THE FORWARD UNIT COUNTERATTACKED WITH FRAGMENTATION GRENADES TO DISRUPT THE AMBUSH.



THE RESULTING BLASTS GAVE THEM COVER TO ADVANCE.



GIUNTA LED THE COVERING FIRE THAT ALLOWED GALLARDO TO DRESS THE WOUNDS OF SPC ECKRODE.

THERE WAS STILL ONE MAN UNACCOUNTED FOR.



**BRENNAN!**  
WE NEED TO FIND BRENNAN!

ROGER THAT!



FULLY EXPOSED TO ENEMY GUN FIRE, GIUNTA SEARCHED THE GROUND FOR SGT. JOSHUA BRENNAN--HIS BEST FRIEND IN THE UNIT.

HE SAW TWO TALIBAN DRAGGING BRENNAN AWAY.



GIUNTA KILLED ONE OF THE ENEMY AND WOUNDED THE OTHER, WHO RAN OFF.



HE FOUND BRENNAN ALIVE AND CONSCIOUS.

YOU'LL GET OUT AND TELL YOUR HERO STORIES.

I WILL... I WILL...



HE EXAMINED BRENNAN AND FOUND HIM SERIOUSLY WOUNDED.

WE'RE GONNA MOVE NOW, OKAY?



INTENSE FIRE RAKED THE HILL AS GIUNTA DRAGGED HIS INJURED FRIEND BACK TOWARD THE REST OF THE PLATOON.

HANG ON, BRO. STAY WITH ME.



GIUNTA ASSISTED MEDICS FROM THE SECOND AND THIRD PLATOONS WHO HAD ARRIVED TO LIFT THE AMBUSH.

BRENNAN WOULD DIE OF HIS WOUNDS THE NEXT DAY.



A B-1 DROPPED A PAIR OF BOMBS ON THE TALIBAN POSITION.



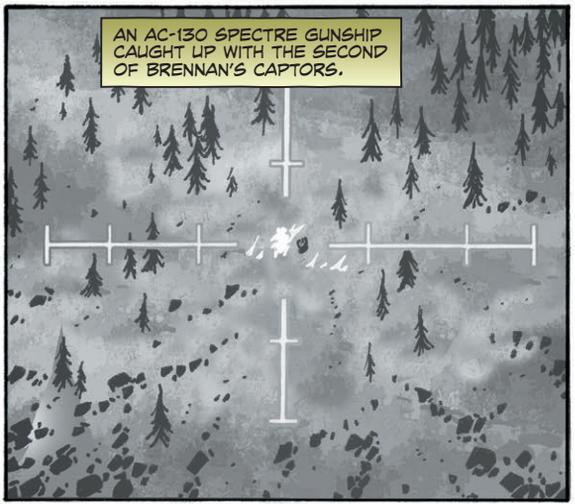
THE ENEMY BEGAN TO SCATTER, CREATING A GAP BETWEEN THEM AND FIRST PLATOON.



THIS GAVE THE APACHE GUNSHIPS ROOM TO OPERATE.



AN AC-130 SPECTRE GUNSHIP CAUGHT UP WITH THE SECOND OF BRENNAN'S CAPTORS.



GIUNTA HELPED ORGANIZE SECURITY FOR THE CHOPPERS COMING TO EVACUATE THE WOUNDED.



WITH A SECURED LANDING ZONE THE WOUNDED WERE MEDEVACED OUT.

THEY WOULD LEAVE THE VALLEY OF DEATH BEHIND.



BY THE TIME IT WAS FINISHED, EVERY MEMBER OF FIRST PLATOON HAD SHRAPNEL OR A BULLET HOLE IN THEIR GEAR.



TWO DAYS LATER GIUNTA LEARNED THAT HE WAS BEING RECOMMENDED FOR HIS NATION'S HIGHEST COMMENDATION.



ERICK GALLARDO HAD A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHAT YOU DID WAS **PRETTY CRAZY**. WE WERE OUTNUMBERED. YOU **STOPPED** THE FIGHT. YOU **STOPPED** THEM FROM TAKING ONE OF OUR OWN.



ON NOVEMBER 16, 2010, GIUNTA RECEIVED THE MEDAL OF HONOR WITH ALL SURVIVING MEMBERS OF HIS SQUAD IN ATTENDANCE.



ON JULY 5, 2017, AT 173RD AIRBORNE HEADQUARTERS IN VICENZA, ITALY, SALVATORE GIUNTA CHOSE TO GIVE HIS MEDAL OF HONOR TO THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM.



FOR HIS SELFLESS COURAGE AND SACRIFICE IN CONFRONTING THE ENEMY AND RESCUING HIS WOUNDED BROTHERS, STAFF SERGEANT SALVATORE GIUNTA WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED.

HE WAS THE FIRST LIVING RECIPIENT OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR SINCE THE VIETNAM WAR.



THE END

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