

Bronze Star with Valor Awarded to Member of IABTI

Master Sergeant Wayne D. Kettelhut, 148th Fighter Wing Explosive Ordnance (EOD) Specialist, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor at an awards ceremony in Duluth, Minnesota on June 15, 2008.

The Bronze Star is awarded for bravery, heroism or meritorious service while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States or while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force. The "V" device represents valor and is awarded for heroism.

This prestigious award was presented to Kettelhut by Major General (retired) Harry J. Sieben, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army and Lt Col (retired) Gary Hetrick, US Army who served with MSgt Kettelhut in Iraq during the time he earned his Bronze Star with Valor.

Master Sergeant Wayne D Kettelhut, United States Air Force, heroically distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous conduct in the face of the enemy of the United States while serving as the Detachment Three Explosive Ordnance (EOD) Disposal NCO. On 27 July 2006, Master Sergeant Kettelhut was embedded with Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha based in Tikrit, Iraq. After a day of working missions with ODA, MSgt Kettelhut and six other US personnel remained on the compound for the night while the ODA

commander and half of his team went out on a convoy. It was later that night that a rather large Anti-Iraqi Force element attacked the compound with mortars and heavy small arms fire. After receiving mortar rounds that im-

acted 75-100 meters from the building he occupied, Master Sergeant Kettelhut moved swiftly under direct enemy small arms fire with no regard to his own safety. He established a firing position on the west end of the compound, which he identified as the enemy's main effort.

After thirty minutes of concentrated small arms fire led by Master Sergeant Kettelhut, the Anti-Iraqi Forces were driven off and no friendly casualties resulted. Master Sergeant Kettelhut bravely defended the compound and repelled Anti-Iraqi Forces. His heroic actions helped fend off what would have been

a catastrophic attack on the ODA compound and its personnel. Master Sergeant Kettelhut's bravery is in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism and reflects distinct credit upon himself, the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, and the United States Air Force.

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