

## Tillis Praises Fort Bragg Medal of Honor Sergeant

By Administrator

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Senator Thom Tillis issued the following statement after attending the White House Medal of Honor ceremony for North Carolina resident U.S. Army Master Sergeant (MSG) Matthew O. Williams: “I was honored to attend the Medal of Honor Ceremony for Master Sergeant Matthew Williams. His heroism during his unit’s six-hour battle in Afghanistan against an estimated 200 enemy fighters is the epitome of bravery. Under attack from enemy fighters using machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, he fearlessly rescued his fellow soldiers while taking on fire for over an hour. I join our Fort Bragg community and fellow North Carolinians in congratulating Master Sergeant Williams on receiving our nation’s highest honor for combat valor for his selfless sacrifice on behalf of the United States.”

Background  
from the Department of Defense:

On April 6, 2008, then-Sgt. Williams was on his first deployment with several other Special Forces operators for Operation Commando Wrath, a mission to capture or kill high-value targets in Afghanistan's Shok Valley.

His team and about 100 Afghan commandos were dropped into the mountainous area by helicopter. As the leading edge of the group began moving up a jagged mountainside, insurgents started attacking from above.

The part of the group under attack, which included the ground commander, was trapped. Meanwhile, Williams and the rest of the team had trailed behind at the bottom of the mountain, and they were forced to take cover while trying to fight back.

When Williams got word that some in the group ahead of him were injured and close to being overrun, he gathered several of the commandos.

He led them across a 100-meter valley of ice-covered boulders and through a fast-moving, waist-deep river on a rescue mission up the mountain. When they got to the forward group, the Afghan forces kept the insurgents at bay while the Americans figured out their next move.

As they were setting up, another soldier was hit by sniper fire. Williams braved the enemy onslaught to give him first aid, get him on his feet, and help him climb down the mountain.

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Williams then fought his way back up to the top to bring the rest of the endangered men down.

It was a near-vertical, 60-foot mountain.

When Williams and others made it back to the top, he killed several insurgents and helped get communications back up and running. Then, still under fire, he went back to moving the wounded men down the mountainside to a little house they were using as their casualty collection point.

But they still weren't safe; insurgents were threatening that position, too. So, over the next several hours, Williams led the Afghan commandos on another counterattack against more than 200 insurgents, keeping the enemy at bay until helicopters were able to fly in and evacuate the wounded.

Williams helped load the wounded men into the helicopters, then continued to direct fire to quell the enemy attack. That gave the rescue patrol time to move out without any further casualties.

...The family lives at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where Williams continues his role in the Special Forces. He said he's hoping to keep that up, even with the notoriety that comes with being a Medal of Honor recipient.