

Michael P Murphy

Specialty: Navy SEAL

BUD/S Class: 235

SEAL Service: (TBD)

Rank: Lieutenant

Age: 29

Home: Patchogue, New York

Assigned: SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team ONE, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

Died: June 28, 2005

Operation: Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)



Details: Murphy was the leader of a four-man SEAL reconnaissance unit that secretly infiltrated into the Hindu-Kush mountains on June 27, 2005. Ambushed on the 28th by overwhelming Taliban forces, Murphy valiantly climbed into the open onto high ground to make an electronic call for rescue. Wounded, he fought on, allowing one member of his squad to escape, before he himself was killed. Murphy's remains were found during a combat search and rescue operation, July 4, 2005.

[Read Michael Murphy's Summary of Action in Operation Redwing](#)

Awards: Lt. Michael Murhpy was awarded the MOH on October 27, 2007. He is only the third service member to earn that highest national honor since President Bush sent U.S. military forces to Afghanistan in 2001, and later to Iraq. He is also the first Navy recipient since the Vietnam War.

Other Awards: Silver Star
Purple Heart
Combat Action Ribbon
Afghanistan Campaign Medal

Contributions: Murphy was part of a dedicated team fighting the Taliban, a fundamentalist regime that a U.S.-led coalition knocked from power in Afghanistan in 2001, but has continued to conduct guerilla operations, particularly along the Pakistan border. Murphy worked to help ensure al-Qaeda terrorists could not train in, nor launch strikes from Afghanistan since their lethal attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. Michael Murphy was a National Honor Society student and varsity football athlete in high school. After graduating from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Political Science, Murphy turned down offers to two law schools to join the Navy and become a SEAL. He served on missions in Jordan, Iraq (twice), Qatar, and Djibouti in East Africa.

LT Murphy deployed to Afghanistan in April 2005. He was the leader of a four-man SEAL squad that secretly infiltrated into the 9,000 foot Hindu-Kush mountains along the Pakistan border on June 27th. The team was conducting a sensitive mission to capture or kill high-value Taliban target Ahmad Shah, known as Ismail, when ambushed by overwhelming Taliban forces. A fierce firefight ensued.

For about 45 minutes, the men fought on, as ammunition ran low. Three SEALs were wounded by gunfire or rocket-propelled grenades. One screamed, "I'm hit!" Murphy yelled back, "We're all hit! Keep moving!"

LT Murphy climbed to higher ground and into the open to make an electronic call for help. Despite his severe wounds, he completed the call and continued fighting, exhorting his men to escape while he held off their attackers.

A Quick Reaction Force immediately mobilized in a daring daytime mission to reinforce the SEAL squad. Eight Navy SEALs and eight Army Night Stalker commandos perished when their MH-47 helicopter was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade and crashed.

The four-man SEAL squad courageously fought on alone. Michael Murphy, Matthew Axelson and Danny Dietz were killed in the fierce firefight as they provided protective fire that allowed a fourth squad member (Petty Officer Marcus Luttrell) to escape. Wounded in both legs, Luttrell walked several miles and was hidden and protected by an Afghani shepherd until U.S. commandos rescued him July 3, 2005.

Murphy's remains were found during a combat search and rescue operation on July 4, 2005. He is being considered for the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic actions. His teammates who fought alongside him — Axelson, Dietz, and Luttrell – were awarded the Navy Cross, the service's 2nd highest award, for valor. The eight SEALs who died in their heroic attempt to rescue them, were all awarded the Bronze Star.

Rear Admiral Joseph Maguire, Commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, told Murphy's father, "Don't think these men went down easily...Taliban bodies were strewn all over, 30-40 were killed, with a total of 80 casualties from the four- man team."

Michael Murphy is remembered with the greatest respect and gratitude by his fellow SEALs, the Navy, and our nation.

Memorials: Michael's father, a Vietnam veteran, remarked that his son "wasn't into medals and calling attention to himself." That noted, he said, "If he is awarded it (the Medal of Honor), it will be a reflection of what we already know about Michael: his bravery, his focus, his determination, his spirit of never give up." One of Murphy's SEAL BUD/S instructors wrote, "I've heard from the one who survived, details about your final moments, and I just want to say that you are an inspiration, a hard core warrior through and through, exactly what every Team guy aspires to be like."

A BUD/S classmate inspired by Michael's toughness and determination wrote, "I remember you with your stress fractures post Hell-Week and limping around with your iron will. Those thoughts will never leave my mind and further commit myself to our country's undying cause of freedom."

A SEAL about to enter BUD/S training, inspired by Murphy's actions, wrote, "I want your family and friends to know that you, all the SEALs and every other military force's sacrifice will not go unappreciated."

And a personal friend recalled, "We always knew he was a tough son of a bitch, but he was so nice." At the end of his radio transmission for help, despite his severe wounds and dire situation, Murphy – ever the officer and gentleman – said, "Thank you."

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