



Sergeant Philip J. Svitak
21 May 1970 - 4 March 2002

Sergeant Philip J. Svitak was born on 21 May 1970 in Lincoln, Nebraska, and grew up in Fremont, Nebraska. He volunteered for service to the nation in 1983 when he entered the Civil Air Patrol. He worked through the ranks to the position of Flight Officer and was awarded the highest award in the Civil Air Patrol, the General Billy Mitchell Award, in 1988. He volunteered for service in the U.S. Army in 1989. After graduation from Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, Medium Helicopter Repairer (67U), SGT Svitak was assigned to the Special Operations Aviation Training Company (SOATC), 160th Special Operation Aviation Training Regiment (Airborne) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. After completing the Basic Mission Qualification Course (Green Platoon), he was assigned to 2nd Battalion at Fort Campbell. While assigned to 2nd Battalion, SGT Svitak served with Delta and Alpha Companies until he was honorably discharged in 1994. SGT Svitak re-entered the Army in 1998 and was again assigned to Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion.

SGT Svitak deployed with Alpha Company during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. He also deployed on numerous JRX, NTC and JRTC rotations in support of Special Operations Forces. SGT Svitak served as a Crew Chief and Flight Engineer and flew over 1200 hours, including over 600 night vision goggle hours. He deployed with Alpha Company to multiple areas across the Central Command in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. SGT Svitak logged over 150 hours in combat flight time during missions in support of Special Operations Forces.

SGT Svitak was a Commandant's List selectee for the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) and a graduate of the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Course. His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (1 OLC), Army Achievement Medal, Aviation Badge, Army Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal (w/Bronze Service Star), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), and National Defense Service Medal. He was posthumously awarded the Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, and Senior Air Crewmember Badge.

SGT Svitak died on 4 March 2002 when he was struck by enemy fire while conducting a rescue mission during the Battle of Takur Ghar, Operation ANACONDA, in southeastern Afghanistan.

SGT Svitak is survived by his wife, Laura; sons, Ethan and Nolan; and his father, Richard. He is laid to rest in Joplin, Missouri, at Ozark Memorial Park Cemetery. The 160th SOAR(Abn) access control point and gate guard office, building #7255, is dedicated in his honor as Svitak Hall.