



## Sal Giunta

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Salvatore “Sal” Augustine Giunta was born on January 21, 1985 in Clinton, Iowa. The oldest of three children of Steven—a medical equipment technician and Rosemary—a pre-school teacher, Giunta grew up in Cedar Rapids and Hiawatha, Iowa. At age 17, while working in a Subway sandwich shop, he decided to enlist and he joined the Army in November 2003. He attended Infantry One Station Unit Training and the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, before being assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Vicenza, Italy, on May 24, 2004. Promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant in 2009, Giunta completed two combat tours to Afghanistan totaling 27 months of deployment.

On October 25, 2007, while conducting a patrol as team leader, Giunta and his team were navigating through the treacherous terrain of Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley when they were ambushed by a well-armed and well-coordinated insurgent force. While under heavy enemy fire, Giunta immediately sprinted towards cover and engaged the enemy. Seeing that his squad leader had fallen and believing that he had been injured, Giunta exposed himself to withering enemy fire and raced towards his squad leader, helped him to cover and administered medical aid. While administering first aid, enemy fire struck Giunta’s body armor and his secondary weapon. Without regard to the ongoing fire, Giunta engaged the enemy before prepping and throwing grenades, using the explosions for cover in order to conceal his position. Attempting to reach additional wounded fellow soldiers who were separated from the squad, Giunta and his team encountered a barrage of enemy fire that forced them to the ground. The team continued forward and upon reaching the wounded soldiers, Giunta realized that another soldier was still separated from the element. Giunta then advanced forward on his own initiative. As he crested the top of a hill, he observed two insurgents carrying away an American soldier. He immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other. Upon reaching the wounded soldier, he began to provide medical aid, as his squad caught up and provided security.

For his extraordinary gallantry, unrivalled courage and selfless leadership in action on October 25, 2007, Giunta was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama in a White House ceremony on November 16, 2010. Staff Sgt. Giunta was the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor for service in Iraq or Afghanistan, the first living service member to be awarded the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War and the eighth service member to receive the nation’s highest military decoration for valor in Iraq and Afghanistan. His other military decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal w/oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, two Army Good Conduct Medals and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal to name a few.

He retired from the Army in June 2011 to attend college. He currently resides in Colorado with his wife Jennifer Giunta.