



Colorado Springs, CO
Silver Star Medal

Gregory Ruske

Trapped with his unit in an exposed position, Ruske returned fire so most of the platoon could move to protective cover. Ruske then moved to a rooftop and continued laying fire even after taking a bullet to the hip.

At that point, Ruske realized that two Afghan National Police officers were still pinned down in the open, taking fire from their Taliban attackers. One ran for cover, but the other officer – one Ruske had worked with at vehicle checkpoints and chatted with through an interpreter – had been shot and was trying to crawl to safety through a hail of bullets.

“Seeing that dirt kick up no more than six inches from his head, I said, “Man, this is jacked up,” Ruske said later. “They are still shooting at this guy. He is still bleeding and shot. We have to go get him.” Disregarding his own safety, Ruske “simply reacted to the training” the Army had used to prepare him for combat, he said.

Ruske ordered his squad automatic weapon gunner, Army Spc. Walter Reed, to spray the enemy in a Z-shaped pattern, expending a whole box of 200 rounds to give Ruske and his buddy, Army Spc. Eric Seagraves, time to run out to retrieve the officer. The two dodged bullets as they grabbed the Afghan police officer’s arms and dragged him toward a wall that provided protective covering. Only when Ruske and Seagraves went to lift the man behind the wall did they realize that Ruske’s leg had been shattered.

Later that day, after Ruske was taken to Bagram Airfield to receive treatment for his gunshot wound, he checked on the Afghan officer and was relieved to see that he had survived and would keep both legs.

Now back at his civilian job as a juvenile corrections officer in Denver, Ruske is awaiting his reassignment to a new Army Reserve unit, because his former unit was deactivated.

