

An American Veteran; One Man's Story

by John Alan Arnold, PhD



Army Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta of Hiawatha, Iowa was awarded the Medal of Honor this week for his bravery in Afghanistan and inducted into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon. As with so many veterans before him, Giunta modestly accepted the honor, remembering his fallen comrades more than the honor being bestowed on him, saying he was only an “average soldier,” saying he “didn't do anything that someone else wouldn't have done.” In one interview, in fact, he called himself a “mediocre soldier.” Other, more sterling, words describing his bravery were provided by his commanders, extending all the way up to the Commander-in-Chief, the President of the United States, who said that Giunta was the kind of soldier that made one “just absolutely convinced this is what America's all about.”

It was doubly appropriate that Staff Sgt. Giunta was given the award only days after the nation observed Veteran's Day, as we paused to remember all of those, living and dead, who have served our country with distinction. Such memories were, in fact, not far from Giunta's mind even as he was given such accolades: “All of this is great. But it does bring back a lot of memories of people that I would love to share this moment with. And I am just not going to have this opportunity because they are no longer with us.”

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