

= Clinton Romesha =

Clinton LaVor " Clint " Romesha ( / ' r??m??e? / ; born August 17 , 1981 ) is a former United States Army soldier who received the Medal of Honor for actions during the Battle of Kamdesh in 2009 during the war in Afghanistan .

Born into a family with a strong military background , Romesha joined the U.S. Army in 1999 , and was posted at various times in Germany , South Korea and Colorado . Trained as an M1 Abrams tank crewman , Romesha had seen four deployments , including to Kosovo , Iraq twice , and Afghanistan . On 3 October 2009 , he was assigned to the 3rd Squadron , 61st Cavalry Regiment , 4th Brigade Combat Team , 4th Infantry Division , deployed to Combat Outpost Keating in eastern Afghanistan . When a force of 300 Taliban insurgents attacked the base , Romesha was credited with rallying his comrades and leading the counterattack , directing close air support and providing suppressive fire to help the wounded to an aid station . Despite being wounded , Romesha continued to fight through the 12 @-@ hour battle .

Romesha left the Army in 2011 to spend more time with his family . He later took a job in the oil industry in North Dakota . On 11 February 2013 , he received the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama .

= = Biography = =

Romesha was born in August 1981 in Lake City , California , to a family with a strong military background . His grandfather , Aury Smith , is a World War II veteran who fought in the Battle of Normandy . His father is a Vietnam War veteran who later became a church leader in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints . Romesha is the fourth of five siblings , including two brothers who also joined the military . He is a member of the LDS Church and attended seminary for four years during high school but ultimately decided not to become a missionary for the church as his family had hoped he would . Romesha grew up in Lake City , where he developed an avid love of hockey .

He married Tamara Romesha on 13 February 2000 . They met in junior high school and began dating several years later . The couple have three children ; Dessi , Gwen , and Colin . Friends describe Romesha as having a sense of humor and being " intense , short and wiry . "

= = = Military career = = =

Romesha enlisted in the United States Army in September 1999 and underwent Basic Combat Training and later Advanced Individual Training at Fort Knox , Kentucky . Trained to be an armor crewman for the M1 Abrams tank , Romesha was first assigned as a tank gunner in Company B , 1st Battalion , 63d Armor Regiment , 2d Brigade , 1st Infantry Division , and posted at Rose Barracks , Germany . During this posting he deployed to Kosovo as part of the Kosovo Force . His next assignment was as a gunner / assistant tank commander with Company A , 2nd Battalion , 72d Armor Regiment , 2nd Infantry Division at Camp Casey , South Korea . After a former mentor was killed in Iraq , Romesha volunteered for a tour supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom when parts of his unit received redeployment orders .

Next , Romesha was assigned as section leader with Troop B , 3d Squadron , 61st Cavalry Regiment , 4th Brigade Combat Team , 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson , Colorado . There , he completed the Long Range Reconnaissance Course , the Advanced Leader Course , and Air Assault Training . Trained as a Cavalry Scout , Romesha saw his second deployment to Iraq in this unit .

In May 2009 , Romesha 's unit deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom . His unit was assigned to Combat Outpost Keating in the Kamdesh District , Nuristan Province in Eastern Afghanistan . It replaced the outgoing 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team at the remote outpost in the mountains of a semiautonomous area of the country . Keating was located in a valley surrounded by steep mountains , and over the course of the deployment , it came under attack

regularly . U.S. commanders opted to close the outpost by October 2009 , considering it indefensible . During the deployment , Romesha was given the nickname " Ro " by his comrades . He was noted for his sense of humor and calm temperament in the difficult deployment .

= = = Medal of Honor action = = =

On 3 October 2009 , according to a report published by U.S. Army historian Richard S. Lowry , Taliban fighters launched a coordinated attack on the outpost from three sides at about 06 : 00 , capturing its ammunition depot . Some 300 fighters participated in the attack armed with a recoilless rifle , rocket @-@ propelled grenades , mortars , machine guns , and small arms , badly outnumbering the International Security Assistance Force ( ISAF ) presence of about 85 U.S. Army , Afghan National Army and Latvian Army soldiers , and the 35 Afghan soldiers who abandoned their positions . It would later be known as the Battle of Kamdesh .

During the first three hours of the fight , the U.S. troops remained under intense mortar and small arms fire , before the Taliban fighters breached the compound and set fire to it . Romesha moved under heavy fire to reconnoiter the area and seek reinforcements from a nearby barracks , helping the ISAF force to regroup and fight despite being targeted by a Taliban sniper . Romesha led the firefight to reclaim the depot , organizing a five @-@ man team to counterattack while still under fire . He then neutralized one of the Taliban fighters ' machine gun teams . While engaging a second , he took cover behind a generator which was struck by a rocket propelled grenade , and Romesha was wounded in the neck , shoulder and arms by shrapnel . Despite being wounded , Romesha directed air support that killed an estimated 30 Taliban and then took out several more Taliban positions himself . He provided suppressive fire to allow three other wounded American soldiers to reach an aid station and then recovered several American casualties while still under fire . Romesha 's efforts allowed the troop to regroup and fight off a force superior in numbers . The fight lasted 12 hours , and eight American soldiers were killed , making the engagement one of the costliest for ISAF forces during the war . Nine soldiers were decorated with Silver Star Medals for the fight . Several days later , the ISAF forces withdrew from the post .

Romesha received the award from President Barack Obama in an award ceremony at the White House on 11 February 2013 . He is the fourth living Medal of Honor recipient for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq ( following Salvatore Giunta , Leroy Petry , and Dakota Meyer ) , and the eleventh overall for these campaigns .

= = = Post @-@ military life = = =

Romesha was only able to contact his wife four days after the battle , and later noted she was greatly upset when hearing the full story of his actions at Kamdesh . In an interview later with Soldiers Live , Romesha said he felt he " was being selfish and not being fair " having volunteered for so many deployments away from his wife and children . Following the Afghanistan deployment , Romesha went through the Army Career and Alumni Program in preparation to separate from the Army . On 4 April 2011 , Romesha left the military in order to spend more time with his family .

Following military service , Romesha moved to North Dakota , where his sister lived , to look for a job in the oil industry . He moved to Minot , North Dakota and purchased a 100 @-@ year @-@ old , flood @-@ damaged home that he is restoring himself . He took a job at KS Industries , an oil field construction firm . Initially crewing a hydro excavation truck , he went through a driver 's training program and later began managing the crews of six other trucks . He currently works as a field safety specialist for KS Industries . His exploits during the firefight were later written about by journalist Jake Tapper in his book , The Outpost .

In a press conference on 16 January 2013 shortly after being notified he would receive the medal , Romesha played down his actions in the conflict , noting many other veterans who had received more serious injuries in the battle . Romesha noted that he did not suffer post @-@ traumatic stress disorder or other lasting psychological injuries from deployment , but that others he knew during the deployment did .

On 11 February 2013 , Romesha received the Medal of Honor at a ceremony held at the White House . After receiving the award , when speaking to the press wearing his Stetson , Romesha stated he felt " conflicted " about receiving the medal due to the loss of those who died while serving with him .

In the days following the award , Romesha was recognized in a number of other events . He was inducted into The Pentagon 's " Hall of Heroes " on 12 February , and traveled to New York City on 17 February to visit with the cast of Spider @-@ Man : Turn Off the Dark on Broadway , hosted by the USO . He was recognized by Governor of North Dakota Jack Dalrymple in an event at the North Dakota State Capitol on 21 February 2013 . On 2 March , Romesha spoke at the military ball of the ROTC program at University of North Dakota . Since then Romesha keeps the Medal of Honor on him . It has some tarnish and wrinkles on it from being carried everywhere , shown to and handled by many .

= = His publications = =

Red Platoon : a True Story of American Valor . Dutton , 2016 . ISBN 0525955054

= = Awards and decorations = =

During his military career , Romesha received a number of decorations . He is authorized to wear three service stripes , six Overseas Service Bars , as well as the former wartime service Combat Service Identification Badge for the 4th Infantry Division and the Distinctive Unit Insignia of the 61st Cavalry Regiment . Romesha 's military decorations include the following awards :

= = = Medal of Honor citation = = =

Staff Sergeant Clinton L. Romesha distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Section Leader with Bravo Troop , 3d Squadron , 61st Cavalry Regiment , 4th Brigade Combat Team , 4th Infantry Division , during combat operations against an armed enemy at Combat Outpost Keating , Kamdesh District , Nuristan Province , Afghanistan on October 3 , 2009 . On that morning , Staff Sergeant Romesha and his comrades awakened to an attack by an estimated 300 enemy fighters occupying the high ground on all four sides of the complex , employing concentrated fire from recoilless rifles , rocket propelled grenades , anti @-@ aircraft machine guns , mortars and small arms fire . Staff Sergeant Romesha moved uncovered under intense enemy fire to conduct a reconnaissance of the battlefield and seek reinforcements from the barracks before returning to action with the support of an assistant gunner . Staff Sergeant Romesha took out an enemy machine gun team and , while engaging a second , the generator he was using for cover was struck by a rocket @-@ propelled grenade , inflicting him with shrapnel wounds . Undeterred by his injuries , Staff Sergeant Romesha continued to fight and upon the arrival of another soldier to aid him and the assistant gunner , he again rushed through the exposed avenue to assemble additional soldiers . Staff Sergeant Romesha then mobilized a five @-@ man team and returned to the fight equipped with a sniper rifle . With complete disregard for his own safety , Staff Sergeant Romesha continually exposed himself to heavy enemy fire , as he moved confidently about the battlefield engaging and destroying multiple enemy targets , including three Taliban fighters who had breached the combat outpost ' s perimeter . While orchestrating a successful plan to secure and reinforce key points of the battlefield , Staff Sergeant Romesha maintained radio communication with the tactical operations center . As the enemy forces attacked with even greater ferocity , unleashing a barrage of rocket @-@ propelled grenades and recoilless rifle rounds , Staff Sergeant Romesha identified the point of attack and directed air support to destroy over 30 enemy fighters . After receiving reports that seriously injured Soldiers were at a distant battle position , Staff Sergeant Romesha and his team provided covering fire to allow the injured Soldiers to safely reach the aid station . Upon receipt of orders to proceed to the next objective , his team pushed forward 100 meters under overwhelming enemy fire to recover

and prevent the enemy fighters from taking the bodies of their fallen comrades . Staff Sergeant Romesha ? s heroic actions throughout the day @-@ long battle were critical in suppressing an enemy that had far greater numbers . His extraordinary efforts gave Bravo Troop the opportunity to regroup , reorganize and prepare for the counterattack that allowed the Troop to account for its personnel and secure Combat Outpost Keating . Staff Sergeant Romesha ? s discipline and extraordinary heroism above and beyond the call of duty reflect great credit upon himself , Bravo Troop , 3d Squadron , 61st Cavalry Regiment , 4th Brigade Combat Team , 4th Infantry Division and the United States Army .