Medal of Honor | Sergeant Major Thomas P. Payne

Photo Cutlines

1. Sgt. Maj. Payne, during his early days as an Army Ranger while in Eastern Afghanistan in 2004. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Payne Thomas P. Payne)

2. Sgt. Maj. Payne during mountaineering training in Colorado in 2016. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

3. Sgt. Maj. Payne competing during the third day of the 2012 Best Ranger

Competition. Sgt. Maj. Payne and his teammate would go on to win the competition. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

4. Sgt. Maj. Payne, posing with a bald eagle brought in by the New York Fire

Department during a joint training exercise in 2016. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj.

Thomas P. Payne)

5. Sgt. Maj. Payne conducting a training jump from a C-130 plane in 2013. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

6. Sgt. Maj. Payne with his fellow teammate after winning the Best Ranger

Competition in 2012. Sgt. Maj. Payne described this as an impactful moment for him and his family; previously injured in 2010, Payne worked to regain his health, marking full recovery by winning the Best Ranger Award in 2012. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

7. Sgt. Maj. Payne and his unit pose with the American flag while in Northern Iraq in 2017. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

8. Sgt. Maj. Payne, during a deployment in Afghanistan in 2010. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

9. Sgt. Maj. Payne pulling security while in Afghanistan in 2010. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

10. Sgt. Maj. Payne while in Iraq in 2017. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

11. Sgt. Maj. Payne conducts ice-climbing training in 2008. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

12. Sgt. Maj. Payne in Northern Afghanistan in 2014. Payne and his unit had been ambushed on this same hill the day prior. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

13. Sgt. Maj. Payne during a mission in Northern Afghanistan in 2014 while conducting a security patrol. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

14. Sgt. Maj. Payne during a 2011 raid in Afghanistan. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

15. Sgt. Maj. Payne during a 2011 raid in Afghanistan.

16. Sgt. Maj. Payne and his teammates prior to a military free fall jump. They hold the American flag to signify duty and devotion to country. (Photo courtesy of

Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

17. Sgt. Maj. Payne on a hunting trip in Montana in 2019. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

18. Sgt. Maj. Payne flying by helicopter in Afghanistan in 2019. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

19. Sgt. Maj. Payne poses for a photo with his father, Drayton Shealy, a pilot and police officer for Richland County Sheriff's Dept. in South Carolina, June 25, 2020. Payne takes pride in being part of a family of service. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

20. Sgt. Maj. Payne with his wife, Alison, shortly after her return from serving at St. Joseph's Hospital in Long Island, NY, where she helped care for patients during the COVID-19 outbreak between April and May 2020.  (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne)

21. U.S. Army Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne poses for an official photo wearing the Medal on Sept. 17, 2020. (U.S. Army photo by Ken Kassens)