



Morris, OK  
Silver Star Medal

Gibson wrestled the terrorist to the ground and gained positional control. He struggled and later stripped the terrorist of his weapon. The terrorist then gripped Gibson's rifle. Without the ability to use a firearm, Gibson engaged the enemy with his hands. The terrorist ripped off Gibson's helmet and all his night vision optics, then began to reach for something hidden in his clothing -- the detonator to his suicide vest. The terrorist screamed "Bomb!" in English.

As Gibson worked to stop the terrorist from detonating his vest, the terrorist had maneuvered into a position that was cutting off Gibson's circulation. Gibson, in an effort to save himself, began to hit the terrorist as hard as he could. His blows rendered the terrorist unconscious. "I got my weapon into his stomach and fired," Gibson said. "He came back to consciousness after that, [but] I knew I got him. I stood up and neutralized him."

"Rangers are proven over and over again in battle," Navy Adm. Eric Olson, commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, said in presenting Gibson with his Silver Star Medal. "Rangers are glorified in Hollywood movies, but you aren't actors. You are real men who make real sacrifices." Gibson said he is honored to serve as a Ranger and have saved his fellow soldier's life.

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### Special 1st Class Joseph Gibson

As the helicopter full of Rangers touched down that April night, Gibson and fellow soldiers found themselves dodging enemy small arms fire less than 50 meters away. Gibson's platoon sergeant would later say the enemy small-arms and machine-gun fire began less than a minute after the group disembarked the helicopter. Among the two Ranger casualties was a soldier with a life-threatening gunshot wound.

Transporting wounded soldier over an uneven field with irrigation ditches and through enemy fire was a challenge, but the Rangers' dedication to each other motivated Gibson to get his friend to safety.

"It was my buddy; I didn't want to quit, Gibson said later. "For a while, it was just me on one end of the litter." Gibson's actions are credited with saving the soldier's life. The soldier returned home safely to see his wife and newborn child.

After assisting in this medical evacuation, Gibson and the Rangers continued on with their mission. They began to clear a field with tall grass and canals near the helicopter landing zone. The Rangers knew enemy fighters were still in the area, even though most had fled when the soldiers touched down. While clearing the field, Gibson stepped on a terrorist hiding in a ditch under some grass. Initially, Gibson continued for a few more steps past the terrorist. But following his gut instinct, Gibson turned around to investigate what he'd stepped on. The terrorist moved to kill Gibson and the Rangers. Gibson grabbed the muzzle of the terrorist's rifle as the terrorist began to fire.

