



Pictured L-R: NCOA President Paul Kingsbury, MSgt Patrick L. Briggs, Laura Briggs, Taylor Briggs, Coen Briggs, CMSgt (Ret) Juliet Gudgel of Aligned Mortgage, Command Chief Master Sergeant Erik C. Thompson, NCOA Chairman of the Board Terry Haines, and MCPO (Ret) Paul St. Sauver of Aligned Mortgage.

The 2021 NCOA Air Force Vanguard Award, sponsored by Aligned Mortgage, was presented to Master Sergeant Patrick L. Briggs in honor and memory of Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant John L. Levitow. Master Sergeant Briggs distinguished himself while serving as senior polygraph examiner and Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, 3rd Field Investigations Squadron, Operating Location Foxtrot, Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, on 14 September 2020.

It was mid-afternoon and sunny when Special Agent Briggs, who was driving from Goodfellow AFB to Oklahoma City for temporary duty, saw the wreckage of an overturned civilian passenger bus.

Briggs immediately pulled over and assessed the situation. As he approached, people were climbing out of the bus. Most had a variety of critical injuries, and some were being attended to by others who had also stopped. Briggs focused on the screaming coming from inside the bus.

While some passengers were still inside, other passengers tried to free two individuals pinned underneath the bus who most likely fell through the windows as the bus fell over on its side. That's when a man with a severely injured arm asked Briggs to get him out through the emergency escape hatch. Briggs was reluctant to move anyone, not knowing the extent of their injuries. Instead, he ran to his vehicle for some shirts to use as slings and tourniquets. He returned to the man with the badly injured arm and tried to

apply a tourniquet when he heard people screaming about an engine fire. He told the man he had to stop but would be back as soon as possible.

The back of the bus was on fire. A few pedestrians brought small extinguishers, but they were ineffective, so Briggs ran down the row of cars now parked along the highway and found a utility truck with a larger extinguisher on it, raced back to the fire and put it out.

Meanwhile, the man SA Briggs was attending to was removed from the bus and taken care of.

Two people were still pinned, when a man with a tractor on a large trailer said he might be able to lift the bus. Three other good Samaritans and SA Briggs unloaded the tractor from the semi-trailer and brought it to the overturned bus. They attempted to lift the bus enough to free the passengers but, unfortunately, due to the position of the bus, they were unsuccessful. Shortly after the attempt, EMS and fire trucks arrived. They used cutting tools and airbags to free those pinned. The local sheriff and state troopers also showed up.

SA Briggs continued to administer to two accident victims in severe states of shock. He escorted them to his air conditioned car, where they could cool down in the shade. Both were frantic because they knew the people pinned under the bus. SA Briggs sat with them for about 45 minutes, until all the critically injured were air lifted or ambulated to local hospitals.

Were it not for SA Briggs, many families would be grieving today. Briggs' quick thinking and decisive actions personify the spirit and intent of the NCOA Military Vanguard Award and bring great honor to him and the U.S. Air Force.

