

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

March 2023



## Clifford Sprouse

### United States Army

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Prairie Chapter, NSDAR

Clifford Sprouse comes from a long line of military service including a great uncle who drove for General Patton and his father who served in Desert Storm. When Clifford was in the eighth grade, during a class trip to Washington, DC he was selected to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



At least one member of Clifford's family has served in every war since the Revolutionary War, and remembering 9/11, Clifford felt it was a calling and his duty to serve. His mother states he has talked about serving since he was a small child. He entered the United States Army on October 28, 2009.

His basic training and Advanced Individual Training were in Fort Sill, Oklahoma from October 2009 to March 2010. Specifically, he trained as a 13F Fire Support Specialist, also known as a Forward Observer. He also did two months of pre-deployment training at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California in 2010.

With this training he was ready to serve his country. He was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas with the 1st Brigade, 2-34th Armored Regiment and deployed to Afghanistan in April 2011.

In Afghanistan he was in the southern region in Maiwand Province which is where much of the fighting for his unit happened. His unit conducted 30 air insertion missions, basically sweep and clear towns, anywhere from two to four days at a time. As a Forward Observer, he was on the front lines with the infantry and would call in fire missions with artillery to helicopters, jets, mortars, and tanks. Anything his radio could get a hold of he would use. He states his primary weapon was a radio.

During his service, his unit conducted fire missions in Afghanistan with 60 mm mortars and worked with the British who wanted to see how we registered our 150 mm artillery pieces known as a Triple 7. They conducted a registration mission, which is a zeroing mission, getting artillery to be as accurate as possible. They also conducted a sweep and clear mission with the British. They were the eyes of the artillery and would call back to them and they would shoot.

At one point they were attached to 4-4 Cavalry and later attached to a special forces unit and got to shoot a 50-caliber sniper rifle as well as shoot a 25 mm chain gun. They also did a mission to capture a HVT (high value target).

His unit also dealt with a lot of IED's buried in the ground or in a vehicle and occasionally took hostile fire. He conducted a Medivac two nights on the same mission to get the wounded out.

While in Afghanistan, he was promoted to E4 Specialist and in 2012 he was promoted to E5 Sergeant. He then trained as a Joint Fire Observer (JFO) to be able to talk to jets and have more communication with them, specifically providing guidance and coordinates.

Returning home to the United States they arrived in Maine where a group of Vietnam Veterans greeted the troops to welcome them back home. From there he returned to Fort Riley, Kansas. He was honorably discharged in 2014 at the rank of Sergeant.

The most interesting thing he saw was just being in Afghanistan and seeing the lifestyle of a third world country compared to how we live. If the residents were not in a major city, they would have no internet and live out of mud compounds. If they were rich, they would have nice mud compounds with some stone, and patches of grass. He wishes more people would be able to experience this to appreciate what they have and be more grateful.

He adds that he misses every guy he was with. He checks in on them to make sure they are ok, knowing that the suicide rate among veterans can be 20 – 30%.

Following his service, he struggled to adjust to civilian life and the lack of structure. In 2018 he married Kristin and adopted her five children. He and Kristin have three more children together. The children range from 18-years old to 2-years old. He currently works for ABF Freight.

His best piece of advice--if you join the service, no matter what branch, make sure you are joining for more than just a paycheck. Make sure you do your job because lives count on you. Also know that if you are in a combat unit, not everyone is coming home. His last piece of advice, know that you are never alone, and you can always ask for help.