

Dakota Meyer

Medal of Honor Recipient & New York Times Best-Selling Author of *Into the Fire* and *The Way Forward*

Sergeant Dakota L. Meyer is a United States Marine Corps veteran and recipient of the military's highest honor, the Medal of Honor. He is the *New York Times* best-selling author of the book, *Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War*. Meyer earned his medal for his actions during the Battle of Ganjigal, which was part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He is the first living Marine to have received the medal since 1973 and one of the youngest. Humble and propelled by a respect for his fallen comrades, Meyer insists that he is not a hero, and that any Marine would do the same thing. Exclusively represented by [Leading Authorities speakers bureau](#) for lectures, he addresses inspiration, motivation, courage, leadership, believing in yourself, doing what is right, and what happened that day in Afghanistan. Meyer is a successful entrepreneur who also currently serves in the Individual Ready Reserve of the US Marine Corps Reserve.

The Attack. In September 2009, three US Marines, a US Navy corpsman, and Afghan soldiers went missing in Afghanistan after being ambushed by 50 insurgents. Defying orders, Meyer went into the "killing zone" to help. Through five successive missions over the course of six hours, he helped save the lives of many American and Afghan troops. Meyer also found the bodies of the four missing men, and, with the help of friendly Afghan soldiers, moved the bodies to a safer area where they could be extracted. Meyer suffered shrapnel wounds to his arm and, in a testament to his heroism, did not expect to survive the battle. "I wasn't really thinking I could die, it was just a matter of when," he said. "I never thought I was going to come out...[but] that's what Marines do." He was 21 at the time.

The Award. During a ceremony on September 15, 2011, President Barack Obama awarded Meyer with the Medal of Honor. Obama called Meyer incredibly down-to-earth, noting that when he tried to tell him that he would be receiving the award, Meyer originally didn't take the call because he was working a new job in construction. Obama jokingly recounted that Meyer said, "If I don't work, I don't get paid." The president called him back during his lunch break and thanked him for taking the call. The two later talked over beers the day before the award ceremony and, according to President Obama, "Dakota is the kind of guy who gets the job done." Meyer was also inducted into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon and honored with a parade.

Civilian Life. With his return to civilian life, Meyer has become an advocate for American veterans. He partnered with the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation to raise \$1 million and issued the "Dakota Meyer Scholarship Challenge to America" to match his efforts. He worked with Toyota and the US Chamber of Commerce to launch the Personal Branding initiative of the Hiring Our Heroes Program to help military veterans and transitioning service members better market themselves to employers. Meyer also wrote a book, *Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War*, which details his journey from a young man raised on a cattle farm in Kentucky to a true American hero. It tells the full story of the chaotic Ganjigal battle for the first time in a compelling and very human way, revealing it as a microcosm of our recent wars. He is also the creator of the podcast *Front Toward Enemy with Dakota Meyer* and co-author, alongside Robert O'Neill, of *The Way Forward: Master Life's Toughest Battles and Create Your Lasting Legacy* – an in-depth, fearless, and ultimately redemptive account of what it takes to survive and thrive on battlefields from Afghanistan and Iraq to our daily lives, and how the perils of war help us hold onto our humanity.