



*Pictured L-R are: NCOA Chairman of the Board CMSgt Gerald Morey, MSgt (Ret) Robert Barnett representing the NCOA JROTC Program, Leslie Kier, SSgt Austin Kier, and CMSgt Edwin Ludwigsen representing the 19<sup>th</sup> Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnn S. Bass.*

The 2023 NCOA Air Force Vanguard Award, sponsored by the NCOA JROTC Program was presented to Staff Sergeant Austin S. Kier in honor and memory of Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant John L. Levitow. Staff Sergeant Kier distinguished himself by heroism on 04 Nov 2022 when he was the First Responder to A 55-mile per hour head on vehicle collision in dense fog. He immediately responded to the crash without hesitation. Staff Sergeant Kier quickly managed the scene by blocking oncoming traffic and called 911 for help. He ensured safety at the crash site by providing direction to the bystanders that gathered.

As a result of the crash, there was gas, oil, and vehicle parts scattered. As the fog thickened and the situation became more dangerous, several more vehicles were involved in a subsequent chain-reaction pile up.

Staff Sergeant Kier identified there were three victims as a result of the crash. One passenger was ejected through the window and lay unconscious in the road in snow and fog while the drivers were still in their vehicles. With three injured people, Staff Sergeant Kier has to prioritize casualty care. He treated the unconscious elderly woman who had large lacerations to the head and showed symptoms of shock. He rolled the victim from a face-down position, stabilized her spine, and cleared her blocked airway. He ensured the victim continued breathing. He applied pressure to the gaping lacerations to minimize blood loss and made a quick decision to employ personal clothing. He

layered clothes, blankets and fabric between the snow and victim and mitigated the shock-related symptoms. Staff Sergeant Kier nursed the victim back to consciousness.

Staff Sergeant Kier then attended to the drivers of the vehicles whose conditions were serious though less severe than the elderly woman's. Overall, he rendered life-saving trauma care to all victims which prevented loss of life.

He tended to all three victims up to and after medics arrived. Staff Sergeant Kier maintained aid until all victims were evacuated and he provided an excellent witness report of the situation to responding troopers. Staff Sergeant Kier was lauded by the responding law enforcement team for his heroic actions!

Staff Sergeant Kier's outstanding leadership and quick reaction, life-saving medical care saved three victims from trauma, hypothermia, and potential loss of life.

The heroic actions of Staff Sergeant Kier epitomize the Air Force Core Values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in all we do.