



## **Sergeant First Class Joel E. Hughes**

### **U.S. Army Special Operations Parachute Demonstration Team**

### **The Black Daggers**

SFC Joel E. Hughes was borne on April 6, 1984 in Tarentum, PA. He graduated high school from Coventry High School in Rhode Island in 2002. SFC Hughes enlisted in the Army in Feb 2002 and in June left for Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Benning, GA where he earned the Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) 11B, Infantryman. In September 2010, he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) and was awarded the 18B MOS of Special Forces Weapons Sergeant.

SFC Hughes' assignments are: In 2002, he was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment located at Fort Stewart, GA where he served as a rifleman, Infantry Team Leader, Sniper, Sniper Team Leader and Sniper Section Leader. In June 2006 SFC Hughes separated from the Army for a brief 15 months. When he then re-entered the Army in September 2007 he was assigned to 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Stryker Brigade Combat Team Brigade Headquarters Fort Wainwright, Alaska as part of the Brigade Commanders personal security detachment (PSD). Shortly after arriving to AK, SFC Hughes decided to attend Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) in Feb 2008 where he became selected to attend Special Forces training. SFC Hughes reported to the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) in April 2009 immediately after attending the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning GA. SFC Hughes graduated the Special Forces Qualification Course in September 2010 and shortly after reported to 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA in December 2010. While stationed at 1<sup>st</sup> SFG (A), SFC Hughes served as Junior Weapons Sergeant, Senior Weapons Sergeant, Company Armorer, Company Assistant Operations Sergeant, and Battalion Headquarters Support Company Operations Sergeant. In June 2015 SFC Hughes reported to the U.S Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) 1<sup>st</sup> Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Alpha (Student) Company. While serving in Student Company SFC Hughes served as an MOS Trainer Adviser and Coach (TAC), Language TAC and Company Senior TAC. In March 2018 SFC Hughes attended assessment and selection for the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Black Daggers Parachute Demonstration Team where he subsequently received orders to report to the team in May 2018.

SFC Hughes' past deployments include: The invasion of Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) from March 2003 through September 2003. Iraq in support of OIF III from January 2005 through January 2006. Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) XIX from August 2012 through May 2013. The Philippines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines (OEF-P) from October 2013 through March 2014. In addition to combat deployments SFC Hughes has deployed on numerous occasions to multiple countries such as Thailand, Philippines and Malaysia while serving with 1<sup>st</sup> SFG (A).

# **U.S. Army Special Operations Command**

## **Biographical Sketch**

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SFC Hughes' military education includes: Infantry OSUT training, the Javelin Gunners Course, The Combat Life Savers Course, The Basic Airborne Course, The Basic, Advanced and Senior Leaders Courses, Special Forces Assessment and Selection, Special Operations Language Training in Indonesian, the Survival Evasion Resistance Escape (SERE) High Risk Course, The Special Forces Weapons Sergeant MOS Course, The Special Forces Qualification Course, Special Operations Static Line Jump Master Course, Special Forces Sniper Courses Levels 1 and 2, The Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat Course, The Special Forces Basic Mountain Course Level III, The Army Mountain Warfare School Summer Course, The Mountain Rifleman High Angle Sniper Course, The Military Free Fall Parachutist Course and the Special Operations Common Faculty Development/Instructor Course.

SFC Hughes' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal (5<sup>th</sup> Award), Army Achievement Medal (7<sup>th</sup> Award), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal (Arrowhead Device, 4 Campaign Stars), Afghanistan Campaign Medal (1 Campaign Star), Humanitarian Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (3<sup>rd</sup> Award), Army Good Conduct Medal (4<sup>th</sup> Award), Overseas Service Ribbon (3<sup>rd</sup> Award), Army Service Ribbon, NATO ISAF Art. 5 Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Presidential Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Superior Unit Award, Master Parachutist Badge, Military Free Fall Parachutist Badge, The Rams Head Device, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge and the Special Forces Tab. Foreign awards include: The Canadian Parachutist Badge, The Columbian Free Fall Parachutist Badge, The Philippine Civic Action Medal, The Philippine Anti-Dissidence Campaign Medal, and The Philippine Military Merit Medal.

SFC Hughes notable achievement's include: The 1<sup>st</sup> SFG (A) Summer 2014 NCO of the quarter, the 1<sup>st</sup> SWTG (A) 2017 NCO of the Year, the USASOC 2017 runner up NCO of the year, recipient of the Major General Robert T. Frederick Award as Instructor of the Class for SFQC Graduation Class 302 in June 2017, and the Distinguished Honor Graduate of the U.S Army Mountain Warfare School Summer Course.