

SILVER STAR RECOMMENDATION FOR SPECIALIST JENNIFER BECK MOTOR TRANSPORT OPERATOR

On 20 March 2005, a 1075th Transportation Company convoy was traveling north on Alternate Supply Route Bismark enroute to Logistics Support Area Anaconda. At 11:30, forty to fifty insurgents ambushed the convoy. The ambush was superbly planned and included heavy small arms fire, improvised explosive devices placed in the road median, two deliberate road obstacles, heavy and accurate rocket propelled grenade fire with direct hits to vehicles, and a ground assault of 10-15 insurgents. The insurgents were carrying handcuffs suggesting they were intending to capture United States soldiers. Specialist Beck was the driver of the third M915 in the convoy when the convoy came to a sudden halt. She heard a barrage of gunfire and one of her platoon members yelling in pain over the radio. Rocket propelled grenade rounds began hitting the trucks in front of her and she saw a black cloud of smoke coming from a vehicle in front of her. The convoy was still not moving, and she heard Staff Sergeant Uhl, the convoy commander, trying to get information over the radio because he had already left the kill zone. She heard Staff Sergeant Uhl say that he was coming back to the kill zone to see what was going on and, finding herself the senior non-wounded member of the convoy in the worst part of the kill zone, she immediately advised him to stay out of the kill zone because she was going to bring the convoy out. After several trucks moved out of the kill zone and enabled her to push her way around the blockage, she moved forward to respond to Sergeant Ricketts' cry for help. Under fire, she dismounted her truck to assess the situation of a battle-damaged M915, and a civilian driver frantically ran from his disabled truck and showed her the wound that he received from a bullet grazing his back. She instructed him to get into her truck as she avoided gunfire and quickly moved towards the disabled M915. As she approached the truck she saw that Private First Class Delancey, the passenger of the M915, had been wounded by a rocket propelled grenade explosion but was still ambulatory. She quickly but calmly instructed him to get into her truck as she climbed aboard the truck's running boards to look into the truck. She saw that Sergeant Ricketts, the driver of the disabled M915, was lying under the crushed console of his truck, wounded in the leg and unable to pull himself out. She yelled for him to see if he could respond. Sergeant Ricketts, blinded by the flash of the rocket propelled grenade and unable to see anything but the console and peppered hood of his cab, thought that he was getting left in the kill zone and had resigned to the belief that he was going to die in that cab. When he heard her yell for him, he replied "I can't get out...go ahead and leave me" over the sound of gunfire and the report of bullets striking his truck. She cursed at him and yelled "there is no way that we are leaving you here," climbed inside the cab, and struggled to pull him through the tangled console and crushed glass in the cab. Pulling parts of the console out of the way, she managed to pull him through and safely guide him to the ground in between the two stopped trucks, safe from enemy fire. Exhausted and scared that the bullets striking the truck would soon hit him, she continued to drag Sergeant Ricketts to a safer position until she was assisted by a civilian driver who helped drag Sergeant Ricketts the rest of the way. She climbed back into her truck to tell her co-driver what was going on and saw that there was no room for Sergeant Ricketts with the three other people in her cab. Her heart sank as she realized she was going to have to leave Sergeant Ricketts behind and she radioed the trucks behind her to tell them that they had to recover Sergeant Ricketts. She dismounted her truck again to instruct the civilian driver to stay with Sergeant Ricketts until he was recovered by someone behind her. Before she left, she yelled to Sergeant Ricketts over the noise of the battlefield to tell him that someone was going to come and get him out of there. Specialist Beck signaled to the civilian drivers behind her to get ready to go, mounted, and drove her M915 out of the kill zone while still under fire with several of the drivers behind her following her out. Once Specialist Beck reached the casualty collection point that Staff Sergeant Uhl had set up, she radioed back to the convoy to see if someone had picked up Sergeant Ricketts. While she was waiting for a report on Sergeant Ricketts, she performed first aid on another soldier who had been shot in the face. Specialist Beck's complete disregard for her own safety, gallantry in action, and calm leadership while under fire directly saved the lives of two soldiers and enabled the convoy to move out of the congested kill zone. Her heroic actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon herself, her unit, and the United States Army.