

Everyone,

Over the next few days you will see on the television news shows, and in the print news media the story of a Military Police Squad who are heroes. Through those outlets, I doubt that their story will get out in a truly descriptive manner. I can't express to you the pride, awe, and respect I feel for the soldiers of callsign Raven 42.

On Sunday afternoon, in a very bad section of scrub-land called Salman Pak, on the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad, 40 to 50 heavily-armed Iraqi insurgents attacked a convoy of 30 civilian tractor trailer trucks that were moving supplies for the coalition forces, along an Alternate Supply Route. These tractor trailers, driven by third country nationals (primarily Turkish), were escorted by 3 armored Hummers from the COSCOM. When the insurgents attacked, one of the Hummers was in their kill zone and the three soldiers aboard were immediately wounded, and the platform taken under heavy machinegun and RPG fire. Along with them, three of the truck drivers were killed, 6 were wounded in the tractor trailer trucks. The enemy attacked from a farmer's barren field next to the road, with a tree line perpendicular to the ASR, two dry irrigation ditches forming a rough L-shaped trenchline, and a house standing off the dirt road. After three minutes of sustained fire, a squad of enemy moved forward toward the disabled and suppressed trucks. Each of the enemy had hand-cuffs and were looking to take hostages for ransom or worse, to take those three wounded US soldiers for more internet beheadings.

About this time, three armored Hummers that formed the MP Squad under callsign Raven 42, 617th MP Co, Kentucky National Guard, assigned to the 503rd MP Bn, 18th MP Bde, arrived on the scene like the cavalry. The squad had been shadowing the convoy from a distance behind the last vehicle, and when the convoy trucks stopped and became backed up from the initial attack, the squad sped up, paralleled the convoy up the shoulder of the road, and moved to the sound of gunfire. They arrived on the scene just as a squad of about ten enemy had moved forward across the farmer's field and were about 20 meters from the road. The MP squad opened fire with .50 cal machineguns and Mk19 grenade launchers and drove across the front of the enemy's kill zone, between the enemy and the trucks, drawing fire off of the tractor trailers. The MP's crossed the kill zone and then turned up an access road at a right angle to the ASR and next to the field full of enemy fighters. The three vehicles, carrying nine MPs and one medic, stopped in a line on the dirt access road and flanked the enemy positions with plunging fire from the .50 cal and the SAW machinegun (Squad Automatic Weapon). In front of them, was a line of seven sedans, with all their doors and trunk lids open, the getaway cars and the lone two story house off on their left.

Immediately the middle vehicle was hit by an RPG knocking the gunner unconscious from his turret and down into the vehicle. The Vehicle Commander (the TC), the squad's leader, thought the gunner was dead, but tried to treat him from inside the vehicle.

Simultaneously, the rear vehicle's driver and TC, section leader two, open their doors and dismount to fight, while their gunner continued firing from his position in the gun platform on top of the Hummer. Immediately, all three fall under heavy return machinegun fire, wounded. The driver of the middle vehicle saw them fall out the rearview mirror, dismounts and sprints to get into the third vehicle and take up the SAW on top the vehicle. The Squad's medic dismounts from that third vehicle, and joined by the first vehicle's driver (CLS trained) who sprinted back to join him, begins combat life-saving techniques to treat the three wounded MPs. The gunner on the floor of the

second vehicle is revived by his TC, the squad leader, and he climbs back into the .50 cal and opens fire. The Squad leader dismounted with his M4 carbine, and 2 hand grenades, grabbed the section leader out of the first vehicle who had rendered radio reports of their first contact. The two of them, squad leader Staff Sergeant and team leader Sergeant with her M4 and M203 grenade launcher, rush the nearest ditch about 20 meters away to start clearing the natural trenchline. The enemy has gone into the ditches and is hiding behind several small trees in the back of the lot. The .50 cal and SAW flanking fire tears apart the ten in the lead trenchline.

Meanwhile, the two treating the three wounded on the ground at the rear vehicle come under sniper fire from the lone house. Each of them, remember one is a medic, pull out AT-4 rocket launchers from the HMMWV and nearly-simultaneously fire the rockets into the house to neutralize the shooter. The two sergeants work their way up the trenchline, throwing grenades, firing grenades from the launcher, and firing their M4s. The sergeant runs low on ammo and runs back to a vehicle to reload. She moves to her squad leader's vehicle, and because this squad is led so well, she knows exactly where to reach her arm blindly into a different vehicle to find ammo-because each vehicle is packed exactly the same, with discipline. As she turns to move back to the trenchline, Gunner in two sees an AIF jump from behind one of the cars and start firing on the Sergeant. He pulls his 9mm, because the .50 cal is pointed in the other direction, and shoots five rounds wounding him. The sergeant moves back to the trenchline under fire from the back of the field, with fresh mags, two more grenades, and three more M203 rounds. The Mk 19 gunner suppresses the rear of the field. Now, rejoined with the squad leader, the two sergeants continue clearing the enemy from the trenchline, until they see no more movement. A lone man with an RPG launcher on his shoulder steps from behind a tree and prepares to fire on the three Hummers and is killed with a single aimed SAW shot thru the head by the previously knocked out gunner on platform two, who now has a SAW out to supplement the .50 cal in the mount. The team leader sergeant, she claims four killed by aimed M4 shots. The Squad Leader, he threw four grenades taking out at least two baddies, and attributes one other to her aimed M203 fire.

The gunner on platform two, previously knocked out from a hit by the RPG, has now swung his .50 cal around and, realizing that the line of vehicles represents a hazard and possible getaway for the bad guys, starts shooting the .50cal into the engine blocks until his field of fire is limited. He realizes that his vehicle is still running despite the RPG hit, and drops down from his weapon, into the drivers seat and moves the vehicle forward on two flat tires about 100 meters into a better firing position. Just then, the vehicle dies, oil spraying everywhere. He remounts his .50 cal and continues shooting the remaining of the seven cars lined up and ready for a get-away that wasn't to happen. The fire dies down about then, and a second squad arrives on the scene, dismounts and helps the two giving first aid to the wounded at platform three. Two minutes later three other squads from the 617th arrive, along with the CO, and the field is secured, consolidation begins.

Those seven Americans (with the three wounded) killed in total 24 heavily armed enemy, wounded 6 (two later died), and captured one unwounded, who feigned injury to escape the fight. They seized 22 AK-47s, 6x RPG launchers w/ 16 rockets, 13x RPK machineguns, 3x PKM machineguns, 40 hand grenades, 123 fully loaded 30-rd AK magazines, 52 empty mags, and 10 belts of 2500 rds of PK ammo.

The three wounded MPs have been evacuated to Landstuhl. One lost a kidney and will be paralyzed. The other two will most likely recover, though one will forever have a bullet lodged between second and third ribs below his heart. No word on the three COSCOM soldiers wounded in the initial volleys.

Of the 7 members of Raven 42 who walked away, two are Caucasian women, the rest men--one is Mexican-American, the medic is African-American, and the other two are Caucasian--the great American melting pot. They believed even before this fight that their NCOs were the best in the Army, and that they have the best squad in the Army.

The Medic who fired the AT-4, said he remembered how from the week before when his squad leader forced him to train on it, though he didn't think as a medic he would ever use one. He said he chose to use it in that moment to protect the three wounded on the ground in front of him, once they came under fire from the building. The day before this mission, they took the new RFI bandoliers that were recently issued, and experimented with mounting them in their vehicles. Once they figured out how, they pre-loaded a second basic load of ammo into magazines, put them into the bandoliers, and mounted them in their vehicles---the same exact way in every vehicle--load plans enforced and checked by leaders! Leadership under fire--once those three leaders (NCOs) stepped out of their vehicles, the squad was committed to the fight.

Their only complaints in the AAR were: the lack of stopping power in the 9mm; the .50 cal incendiary rounds they are issued in lieu of ball ammo (shortage of ball in the inventory) didn't have the penetrating power needed to pierce the walls of the building; and that everyone in the squad was not CLS trained.

Yesterday, Monday, was spent with the chaplain and the chain of command conducting AARs. Today, every news media in theater wanted them. Good Morning America, NBC, CBS, FOX, ABC, Stars and Stripes, and many radio stations from Kentucky all were lined up today. The female E5 Sergeant who fought thru the trenchline will become the anti-Jessica Lynch media poster child. She and her squad leader deserve every bit of recognition they will get, and more. They all do.

I participated in their AAR as the BDE S2, and am helping in putting together an action report to justify future valor awards. Let's not talk about women in combat. Let's not talk about the new Close Combat Badge not including MPs.